Establishing the Elements of Music Groundwork

This second tour builds upon the elements of music presented in the first tour, and features 3 new elements of music: form, texture, and color. After learning about the elements in this tour, you will see how all 6 elements of music fit within the architectural design of music.

In this lecture, you will learn how composers organize their musical ideas by using a musical structure known as form.

This knowledge will allow you to recognize the main themes of a musical composition and then identify the main sections of any musical composition. Your listening skills will be sharper.

By the end of the lecture, you will be able to identify the different sections of form, listen for the components of form, and increase your perception of music.

Comic Relief from the Elements of Music

A man was crossing a road one day when a frog called out to him and said, "If you kiss me, I'll turn into a beautiful princess, I will be your loving companion for an entire week." He bent over, picked up the frog, and put it in his pocket.

The frog then cried out, "If you kiss me and turn me back into a princess, I'll stay with you for a year and do anything you want." The man took the frog out of his pocket, smiled at it, and returned it to his pocket.

Finally, the frog asked, "What is the matter? I've told you I'm a beautiful princess, that I'll stay with you for a year and do anything you want. Why won't you kiss me?"

The man said, "Look, I'm a concert pianist. I don't have time for a girlfriend, but a talking frog is cool."

Form Overture

Form allows us to tell the difference between musical styles such as jazz and rock and roll.

We are capable of doing this task instinctively since we recognize the nuances of form by constantly listening to music. It is helpful to know about form but you can still enjoy music even though you may not be an expert in form.

Some popular music today uses simpler form designs that follow a formula. This is done so the music has a wider appeal among the younger generation.
Form Rationale

Form is the way of organizing musical ideas within a formal musical structure. You could think of form as the architecture of music. It is considered an essential element of music.

Think of form as a basic design. Every style of music has its own design, and composers use these designs to organize their musical ideas. In more simple words, form is the way composers organize musical ideas.

When you write a report for English class, you generally follow a design that has an introduction, body, and a conclusion. This is a standard way of writing a report.

Musical form is similar, allowing composers to select from a variety of musical designs to create their music.

When we are aware of musical form, we can identify musical themes, follow the way they change, and recognize when they reappear as we enjoy an extended piece of music.

Unraveling Form

It is not easy to follow music as it goes from section A to section B or from one section to another.

There are many details that one must pay attention to. If the tempo of the work is fast and the musical language not well understood, one can be confused very easily.

The purpose of this lecture is to make sure that you listen to the examples given throughout and review the text that goes with it. I assure you that by the end of this lecture you will be amazed at how differently you will listen to music.

By being aware of form, a big door opens in front of you that allow you to understand the architectural design behind any style of music.

If it weren’t for form, different styles of music would not exist.

Listening to a new piece of music can be like your first day of school. You have no idea how your day is going to be, but at least you have a class schedule. Just as the school day develops through a schedule, an extended piece of music develops through its form.

By understanding the process, then you will be able to distinguish native characteristics of various styles of music including classical music.
It is similar to identifying the ingredients of a recipe. You don’t have to like the result but at least you know what is in it.

**Sections in Music**

A musical composition functions as a unit, and this unit is made up of different sections.

Sections are segments of music that are different that other sections. For example, the music material in section A is always different than the music material in section B. One section complements the other.

Individual segments become apparent as we listen to the overall work and the interaction of each one of its parts.

Some hip-hop music today uses this type of form, in which they continuously repeat the block of music while changing the lyrics through the development of a story.

Every piece of music has the possibility of using a different form.

**Basic form A-B**

In order to gain a better understanding of form let me introduce you to the most basic form of music: A – B. Why is this so? Well, because it sounds like a question and an answer.  
*Hello, how are you? I am fine thanks.*

Here, the musical work is made out of two different sections.

**A-B-A**

In A-B-A form, A is the first section, B is the second section, and then A is the third section.

If a section of a composition returns, then its letter label is repeated.

For the most part, A-B-A is a familiar layout in music. It represents balance in music.

**Form in Songs**

It is not unusual to listen to a piece that has only one segment which repeats constantly. This is commonly found in music that uses lyrics.

In general, the music just sets the mood and the story takes center stage. The music is repetitive but stays in the background. The relevant point is the story being told.
The form then is unbroken and therefore is considered an A-form.

When you have an A-B form means that the composition has two contrasting sections. Again, think of it as a question and answer type of form or architecture.

**Sonata-Form**

Let’s now learn about a form design used by classically trained composers.

In classical music, the Sonata-form design became very popular during the 1800s. It grew as a reaction to the florid elaboration of the music of the Baroque.

Basically, during the baroque period of music, form was not as important as it became during the Classical period.

Composers of the Classical period of music developed their musical ideas in a more organized way by using the Sonata-form design.

**Parts of Sonata-Form**

The Sonata-form design is composed of three sections: Exposition, Development and Recapitulation.

Just think of a report that you have to submit for your English composition class. After finishing the outline, your report must have three main parts or sections: the introduction, the body of your report, and the conclusion.

Well, the same applies to the Sonata-form design.

**Exposition**

The Exposition has two musical themes, transitions, and a possible codetta. We will explore all the components of Exposition in the next few slides.

First, let’s begin with the themes. Both themes are exposed for the first time in the exposition section.

Usually these themes are contrasting in nature: one being bolder or more dramatic and the other being more lyrical. These themes are contrasting, and will be the main subject of a musical composition.

Of course, the hardest part to follow is the first section or the Exposition.
This is simply because that’s when we have to identify and remember important themes: namely the first and the second theme.

In music, to give a better description of the themes, we stretch and play with them in different instruments.

You might listen to one theme played by one family of instruments and then the composer may select a different instrument or family of instruments to present it.

**Transition**

Composers use transitions to join all the different segments within a section. Usually, there would be a transition between the first and second theme of the exposition.

The transition is how a composer gets from one section to another in his or her composition.

However, in classical music, a lot of the times, the transitions are confusing. This is because the transition sounds like it is going from one musical place to some other musical place.

Additionally, transitions are very short and slightly different from the main themes.

Transitions are necessary because they help the composer join his musical ideas by inserting little or perhaps not so little supporting material.

Transitions allow us to travel smoothly from theme to theme. They also connect sections.

**Codetta**

The codetta follows the second theme of the exposition.

The composer uses transition to connect the second theme to another section within the exposition named the codetta, which acts as a final tag for the exposition.

**Development**

Right after the Exposition section is done, we move to the Development section of the Sonata-form.

The Development is where two musical themes are tossed, turned, and twisted into different variations and tonalities. When the two themes have been explored to the composer’s satisfaction, the Development ends.
This is comparable to the body of an English composition report. In the development, all the musical ideas presented during the Exposition will be explored by the composer.

Playing with the two themes of the Exposition section is the essence of the Development.

The Development section is the composer’s extension of their creative process that started in the Exposition.

**Recapitulation**

The last section of the Sonata-form is the Recapitulation. The Recapitulation section is the easiest to hear because it recalls the first two themes. It also uses transitions just like in the exposition.

So at this point, we are returning home. It will feel very familiar because we will listen to sounds that have been played before.

The Recapitulation will complete the first movement of Mozart’s Symphony No. 40 in G minor.

As a way to indicate the ending, Mozart writes a final section also known as Coda. The Coda is usually played at the end of a movement. It is short and conclusive.

**AABA Form**

AABA is the Sonata-Form in miniature. This form is a lot easier to hear because it is short, it can be counted, and three of its sections are exactly the same.

In regards to jazz music, the A section at the beginning and at the end contain the main theme of the music piece. In the middle of the piece, the jazz musician uses the chorus format to play a solo that develops his or her musical ideas. This is where jazz improvisation takes place.

The chorus has the same duration as the AABA, or 32 bars. In music, if you have a nine-chorus song, chorus two might be called a sax solo chorus, an ensemble chorus, or the name of the instrument that is playing a solo.

Other types of form exist in the musical world. I would like for you to learn about the form of popular music.

A 32 bar song is a type of form commonly used in popular music. It is divided into 4 equal sections (AABA) of 8 bars each. Note that 8 times four equals 32.
The B section is called the bridge because it joins two A sections. The B section shares some similarity with the transitions in Sonata-Form.

**Theme and Variations**

Another architectural design used quite often is Theme and Variations.

Theme and variations is a style of composition that first presents a basic theme, develops the theme, and then alters that theme in successive statements.

It is similar to stating an idea or a sentence, and adding a variation of the same idea every time that a repetition is played.

**The Blues**

Symphony music has its roots based mostly on European folk themes. Prior to the development of the Blues, North Americans did not have a music of their own.

The Blues to take shape from African American influences in the late 19th century, and became the representative from of American music in the 20th century.

This is the most original form of American music. Harmonies are groups of notes that sound simultaneously, which is fundamental to understand the character of the Blues.

Harmonies are synonymous with chords. In the Blues, there are only three chords: the 1st chord, the 4th chord, and the 5th chord.

The basic foundation of the Blues has 12 bars, or measures. These 12 bars can be divided into three sections of four bars each. The first section has four bars and only one chord, which is the 1st chord.

The second section has two chords: two bars of the 4th chord and two bars of the 1st chord.

The third section has four bars but three chords: one bar of the 5th chord, one bar of the 4th chord, and one bar of the 1st chord.

Several repetitions occur during a presentation of a Blues piece.

First, composers use the 12 bar basic foundation of the blues to present the main theme of their composition. After the first 12 bars, improvisation takes place by repeating the same 12 bars, over and over again, in what is known as the Riff chorus. This repetition may go on for as long as the musicians want to improvise on the theme.
When the musicians are ready to finish, they play the initial 12 bars, thus concluding the presentation of that particular blues song.

Call and Response

Call and response chorus occurs when one or two instruments make a musical call, and then other instruments respond musically to the initial call.

This used occasionally in all types of music, and especially in sections where the improvisation takes place.

Conclusion

In this lecture we learned that Form is the way of organizing musical ideas within a formal musical structure, kind of like the architecture of music.

You learned about the structure of music, the components of Sonata-form, themes and variations, the Blues, and call and response.

Your perception of music should now be increased and should be able to identify the different sections of form and recognize how they apply to the actual listening of music.
Establishing the Elements of Music Groundwork

Texture and color are the remaining two elements of music I have selected to cover. This lecture is divided into two parts.

The first part will explain the different types of textures and their applications. The second part will explain the meaning of instrumental color as it is used by composers in their music.

After completing this lecture, you will be able to identify the different types of texture. Additionally, you will be able to describe why instruments have different sound qualities.

Comic Relief from the Elements of Music

A tourist is sightseeing in a European city. She comes upon the tomb of Beethoven, and begins reading the commemorative plaque, only to be distracted by a low scratching noise, as if something was rubbing against a piece of paper.

She collars a passing native and asks what the scratching sound is.

The local person replies, "Oh, that is Beethoven. He's decomposing."

Texture Overture

Besides thinking about harmonies, rhythms, melodies, and themes, composers usually think about the instruments they will use in their music. Orchestration involves the selection of instruments that will be used in a composition. Composers use orchestration to give the texture to their music.

Texture is the element of music which describes the depth, nature, and relationship among different musical lines. Texture also refers to the amount of instruments used in any particular musical work.

The texture of a piece can be affected by many things, including the number of instruments playing at one time, the individual sounds of the instruments playing these parts, and the rhythmical and harmonic structure of the work.

Types of Texture

There are many forms, or types, of texture. These are:

- Monophonic
- Polyphonic
- Homophonic
• Heterophonic
• Mixed

Monophonic Texture

A melody that is played alone without accompaniment is the simplest pattern of musical texture.

This melody is an independent musical line which may be sung or played by one individual performer or by a group of performers.

A single musical line implies “monophonic texture.” Monophonic texture means that there is only one musical line and nothing else. One way to remember the term monophonic is to consider its parts:
• Mono refers to one.
• Phonic refers to sound.
• Therefore, monophonic refers to one sound.

Monophonic Texture Examples

Examples of monophony include the following:
• Children singing the melody of a song without any instruments.
• A solo trumpet playing a trumpet musical piece.
• A family singing the melody of "Happy Birthday."
• Any time several instruments play the same melody together.

Polyphonic Texture

Polyphonic texture consists of several different melodies performed simultaneously, resulting in some type of harmony.

In the same manner as before, we can say that:
• Poly refers too many.
• Phonic refers to sound.
• Therefore, polyphonic refers to many sounds.

Polyphonic Texture Example

Forms of polyphonic texture include Rounds, which are melodies that are played in a staggered manner.

Rounds are melodies which can be performed independently and start at different times to produce harmony.
These melodies never start at the same time. One melody overlaps the other forming a very unique texture.

**Early Polyphony**

In music from the medieval period, there was less independence of voices. If we move further along in history, we can see that by the 1400s, there were many composers who composed their works with a more polyphonic concept of voice distribution.

Musical lines were independent in the melodic sense and more dependent in the harmonic sense or the tonality of the work.

**Homophonic Texture**

Homophonic Texture consists of a melody with chordal accompaniment, or music with chordal harmony. Chordal accompaniment is when composers use chords to provide a musical layer of accompaniment.

We can say that:
- Homo refers to same
- Phonic refers to sound
- Therefore Homophonic refers to “same sound”.

This type of texture is similar to a voice singing to a piano accompaniment.

**Homophonic Example**

In the example to the left, you can see the melody in the upper staff and the chordal blocks of in the lower staff.

**Homophonic Example**

Sometimes, the notes in the melody line, along with the chordal accompaniment lines, move together with exactly the same or very similar rhythm.

Other times, the notes in all of the voices may move together without a definitive melody in any voice, but with the same rhythmic figure.

The example to your left shows you a texture known as pure homophonic, or chordal texture. In this texture, all the voices move together with the same rhythmical figure.

**Heterophonic Texture**
Heterophonic texture takes place when two or more musicians present their version of the original melody as they play their instruments. This often results in what is known as improvisation.

A good example of heterophonic texture is Dixieland music. Musicians play versions of the main theme in a slightly different way from other instrumentalists.

**Mixed Texture**

Mixed texture consists of multiple melodic voices in addition to chordal harmony.

Both vertical and horizontal harmonic relationships are present among the notes in different voices.

This is a more advanced style of texture since involves complete independence of melodic and harmonic lines.

**Mixed Texture Example**

The score to the left shows you an example of mixed texture.

The score presents each instrument and its own individual line.

**Conclusion**

We just discovered that texture is the element of music which describes the depth, nature, and relationship among different musical lines.

There are several kinds of texture, which include:

- Monophonic
- Polyphonic
- Homophonic
- Heterophonic
- Mixed
On the Road to Instrumental Color

You just finished learning about the different types of textures and their musical applications.

We learned about the following types of texture:
- Monophonic
- Polyphonic
- Homophonic
- Heterophonic
- Mixed

In the second part of this lecture, you will learn about the meaning of instrumental color as it is used by composers in their music.

Instrumental Color Definition

Instrumental color is the quality of sound that distinguishes one instrument from another - it's the color and sound qualities of instruments.

This does not mean that all saxophones sound green, or that all clarinets sound purple.

However, what we are trying to imply is that each instrument has its own recognizable voice with specific tonal qualities.

Think for a moment about how familiar the voices of your parents or friends are to you. This is because of the unique characteristics of their voices.

Determining Factors of Instrumental Color

In general, instrumental color is determined by a series of factors that determine the characteristic sound of any instrument.

These factors are:
- Overtone structure
- Method of sound production
- Instrument construction
- Playing technique
- Musical aesthetics

Overtone Series

The first determining factor of instrumental color is the overtone series. The overtone series is the physical element of the instrument that acts as the DNA of its sound.
When we talked about Pitch back in the melody lecture, I mentioned that any given musical sound vibrates at a unique frequency. This frequency is measured in Hertz. In the example to the left, you can see that several other notes, which are called overtones, are present when the fundamental note is played.

The fundamental note in this example is the C note. This C note vibrates at 131 Hz. The other notes are components of this note, just like the color green is made up of several colors in order to be green.

**Sound Production**

It is important to mention that there several methods involved in sound production.

The overtone of a single note fluctuates in intensity. When a performer plays a musical note, the sound begins, then it sustains for a short moment, and then it finally decays.

For plucked instruments, like a guitar, the sound begins immediately and is followed by an immediate sound decay.

For wind and bowed instruments, like the clarinet and violin, the sound has softer beginning. With these instruments, the sustained period and the decay period are controlled by the performer.

- For wind instruments, the sustain and decay period depend on the ability of the performers to hold their breath.
- For string players, the sustain and decay period depend on the use of the bow which controls the sound.

**Construction Materials**

Instrumental color is also affected by the material used in the construction of the instrument.

Metal instruments sound clear and bright because metallic materials emphasize the second harmonic, which is the next note above the fundamental note.

Wooden instruments are not as bright because the resonant properties of the wood emphasize a wider range of harmonics.

**Playing Technique**

Additionally, the performer's playing technique can affect instrumental color in many ways.
The same instrument can produce contrasting colors, depending on the player and their cultural background.

Different cultures have distinct aesthetic preferences for particular sound qualities.

**Instrumental Color Examples**

As we get to the end of this lecture, it is important to mention that instrumental color is classified according to their respective musical family.

Take a look at the graphic to your left.

**Conclusion**

In this lecture you learned about texture and color and how they help shape your understanding and appreciation for music.

By now you should be able to identify the different types of texture and describe why instruments have different sound qualities.