

Atonal Analysis Project

Description

The purpose of this project is to use the analytical techniques you have learned in Straus Chapters 1-4 in service of your own analysis. Choose an opening passage of about 12 to 24 measures in length, and develop an appropriate analytical hypothesis. The project has two main components:

1. An **on-score analysis** (with supporting data sheet)
2. A 2-3 page (typed, double spaced) **analytical paper** (with supporting musical examples/graphs) that explains your on-score analysis and analytical graphs.

Both components should mimic the style and content of the Straus end-of-chapter analyses and analyses we have discussed in class. You will need to turn in two photocopies of the score: 1. a clean copy, and 2. copy containing your on-score analysis.

Optional Composition Track

Students with sufficient training in composition may elect to compose AND analyze an original composition. It's twice the work with twice the reward. Special permission of instructor required!

Process

- **Choose a work to analyze.**
Search for an opening passage of an atonal work by that appeals to you. Atonal works by Schoenberg, Berg, Webern, are always a good place to start, as are works by Bartok, Stravinsky, and Varèse. If you're having difficulty choosing a work, look for project ideas in the Straus end-of-chapter Analysis sections, or come see me for help. All selections must be approved by your instructor.
- **Search the literature for an analysis of the work you have chosen.**
Use the Straus 3/e Index to search for a discussion of your work, or a similar work by the composer you have chosen. Consult the Straus end-of-chapter Bibliography sections to see if your work is cited. Use JSTOR to locate an analysis of your work, or search for high-quality online publications such as *Music Theory Online* (MTO). Of course, you can use the good-old Music Library to search for an analysis as well. Be sure to report all sources (books, articles, scores, CDs, Web sites, etc.) that you consult at the end of your analytical paper. The use of secondary sources is not a requirement for the project, however, it can make the project considerably easier to execute if you find analysis to be particularly challenging.
- **Use the analytical techniques discussed in Straus Ch. 1-4 to uncover relationships that exist beneath the surface of the music.**
After listening to a recording of your work a number of times, notate the most important melodic and harmonic ideas on staff paper, ideas that seem to serve as basic structural units for the work. Create a rough on-score analysis, circling significant pc sets on the score, or continue your work on staff paper, notating significant melodic, harmonic, voice leading, counterpoint, registral symmetry, etc. structures on staff paper. Identify the normal form of all pc sets you consider, determining their set class membership (Forte name/prime form) and ic vectors as you go. Carefully attempt to create a valid *segmentation* of the passage. Generate your data sheet (see below) as you go. Your data sheet should identify the normal form, set class (Forte name and prime form) and ic vector of all significant ideas. Share this information with your instructor to obtain some feedback on your segmentation process.

Project Proposal (Due via e-mail: Friday, Oct. 22)

E-mail me <rbain@mozart.sc.edu> the composer, title, date of composition of your project.

| Deliverables | Grading |
|---|---|
| 1. Project proposal e-mail | Selection of work - 10 % |
| 2. Clean score | Followed project guidelines - 10 % |
| 3. Score with on-score analysis | Submitted required deliverables - 10 % |
| 4. Data sheet | Analytical paper presentation and analytical approach demonstrate a good understanding of the concepts presented in Straus- 30% |
| 5. 2-3 page ¹ analytical paper (typed, double-spaced) | |
| 6. Motivic analysis (on staff paper or Figures w/in paper) with appropriate analytical symbols. | Data sheet, graphs, diagrams, etc. - 10% |
| 7. Graphs, diagrams, etc. | Motivic analysis sheet or musical examples - 10 % |
| 8. References | Used analytical techniques presented in the Straus appropriately - 10 % |
| | Overall impression of project - 10 % |

Analytical Process Overview

1. Create a rough on-score segmentation of the work or staff paper.
2. Circle important ideas (motives, set classes, pc sets, interval classes, simultenaieties, etc.). Create a data sheet that identifies the normal form, set class membership, and ic vector of all circled sets. Note set relations as appropriate.
3. What motives, set classes, pc sets and interval classes seem to serve a foundational role in the structure of the passage? Create your motivic analysis sheet by notating the *most significant* motivic and harmonic units on staff paper. Analyze the structure of these units using the techniques presented in the Straus. How are these units related to one other? Try creating a *transformational network diagram* (e.g., pp. 42-44), *transformational voice-leading diagram* (e.g., pp. 107-110) to describe large-scale relations you uncover.²
4. In your analytical paper, be sure to discuss the role of *centricity* and *tonal reference* in works that demand it.
5. Note the significance of the following properties and relations for the most important pc sets

| | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| T_n/T_nI relations | Z-relations |
| Invariance relations ³ | CSEG relations |
| TC property | Use of referential collections |
| IC distribution (max, min, unique multiplicity, etc.) | Use of NROs |
| Literal and abstract complement relations | <i>etc.</i> |
| Literal and abstract subset relations | |

A Note About Segmentation and Analysis

Be sure to read pp. 59-60. Also be sure to take at least the following into account when producing your segmentations: *vertical simultenaiety*, *linear projection*, *rhythm*, *metrical placement*, *dynamics*, *articulation*, *register*, *contour*, and processes like imitation, expansion/contraction, sequence, etc.

¹ Graduate students must write a 3-5 page paper.

² Also feel free to use pitch sets, multisets, voice-leading theories, Bernard-style symmetry graphs, and anything else we have discussed in class.

³ Common tones under T_n and T_nI .