

Score Analysis

Adapted from *Choral Music Methods and Materials* by Barbara A Brinson

Title:

Composer:

Publisher:

Text

1. What or who is the source of the text?
2. What meaning and/or mood does the text convey?
3. Is there any word painting? If so, where?
4. Are there any potential diction problems? If so, where?
5. Does the text present potential problems with word stress? If so, what words where?

Form

1. What is the overall form of the composition?
2. During which section does the climax of the entire piece occur (if there is a climax)?

Melody

1. Does the melody consist predominantly of short or long phrases?
2. Is the melody predominantly conjunct or disjunct?
3. Is there a short melodic motive on which much of the entire piece is based? If so, what is it?
4. Are there any problem intervals within one part or between parts? If so, what and where?

Harmony

1. In what key is the music written? Does it modulate? If so, to what key(s) and where does it happen?
2. Is the harmonic rhythm predominantly fast, medium, or slow?
3. Describe the harmonic language. Is the harmony in the different section diatonic or chromatic? Where and how?
4. Are there any significant points of dissonance?
5. Are there places where the chord movements may be difficult or awkward for the chorus? If so, where?

Rhythm

1. Is there one rhythmic motive on which much of the rhythmic structure is based? If so, what is it?
2. What is the tempo? Does this make any rhythmic execution difficult? If so, what and where?
3. Are there any meter changes (3/4 to 9/12 for instance)? If so, what note value will remain equal?
4. Is there swing rhythm? If so, is it light, medium, or heavy? Does it change? If so, where?
5. Is there a mixture of straight and swing rhythm? If so, where?

Texture

1. Is the texture generally thick, thin, or does it change? If it changes, where does it change?
2. Is the composition predominantly monophonic, polyphonic, homophonic, or a mixture? Describe.

Dynamics

1. What is the overall dynamic scheme of the piece?
2. Are there places where the dynamic level is “written into the music” (through the addition of voices, or use of range, etc.)? If so, where?

Relationship of Parts

1. Are there places in the music where one part section of the chorus is more important than the others? If so, where?
2. Are there any groupings of chorus sections into duets, trios, or other textures? If so, where?
3. Are there rhythmic or melodic similarities between parts that could be taught at the same time? If so where? (Compare differing form sections: A1, A2, A3 for instance.)

Historical Background

1. During what period of music history was the piece written?
2. What characteristics of the period are found in the music you are studying?
3. What performance practices would be applicable to the study and performance of this piece?
4. What circumstances (personal, musical, and/or historical) surrounded the composer at the time this piece was written?

Conducting Considerations

1. Given the tempo and meter of the composition, what conducting pattern will you use?
2. Are there places where you will need to go outside of the traditional conducting pattern?
3. Given the text and tempo, what style of conducting (legato, marcato, etc.) will be appropriate? Will this style change? If yes, where?
4. Locate important entrances and releases. Mark them in the score.
5. Locate any rhythmic values that will need to be shortened to allow for breathing. Mark them in the score

Go through your score and mark perfect 5ths, octaves, major seconds, phrase targets, breaths, vowel sounds and changing chord positions for held tones. See the example sheet: Yesterday I Heard the Rain.