

# ELEMENTS OF MUSIC

## For Aural Analysis

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### **“Sound” (General Description)**

Instruments, voices used (What are the performing forces?)  
Volume (What is the dynamic level? Does it change?)  
Mood (Is it forceful, playful, peaceful, calming, etc?)

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### **Harmony**

Tonality (Is the harmony major, minor, changing?)  
Level of consonance/dissonance (Is the combination of sounds mostly pleasing or harsh?)

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### **Melody**

Melodic structure (Is the melody constructed of long phrases or short? Are recurring motives used?)  
Pitch contour (Mostly conjunct [stepwise motion], disjunct [leaps], or mixed?)  
Pitch range (Does each melody exhibit a wide, narrow or medium pitch range?)

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### **Accompaniment**

Forces used (What instruments and/or voices are used to accompany melody? Do they change? When?)  
Prominence (Is the accompaniment prominent or unobtrusive?)  
Relationship of accompaniment to melody (Do the accompanying lines imitate the melody, or are they different? Describe the accompaniment.)

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### **Rhythm**

Presence or absence of a beat  
Prominence and regularity of beat  
Meter (grouping of beats)  
Complexity/simplicity of each level of rhythm

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### **Form**

Order of events (Describe the introductions, entrances, changes)  
Overall structure of composition (How many movements? Length of each? Order of events in each?)  
Is this a “standard” form?

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### **Text**

Meaning of the words (What do they tell us?)  
Language/writing style of words (Are they in English? Formal or casual writing style?)  
Relationship of words to the music (How does the music illustrate the words...i.e. does the pitch rise on the word “up”?)

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Also consider for all: What is the most noticeable element in this piece?  
How does each element change during the piece?  
What is unique about the use of each element?

# BRIEF OUTLINE OF WESTERN MUSIC HISTORY

DATE	PERIOD	COMPOSERS	FORMS
500-1400	Medieval	Leonin Hildegard	Gregorian Chant Organum
1400-1600	Renaissance	Palestrina Josquin Gabrieli	Mass Madrigal Music for Brass
1600-1750	Baroque	Monteverdi Bach Handel Vivaldi	Opera Keyboard Forms Oratorio Concerto
1750-1827	Classical	Haydn Mozart Beethoven	String Quartet Sonata Symphony
1827-1900	Romantic	Schubert Chopin Brahms Wagner Tchaikovsky Berlioz Mussorgsky	Art Songs Small Piano Works Grand Opera Program Music
1900-Modern		Schoenberg Stravinsky Copland Cage Subotnick	12-Tone Music Electronic Traditional Styles Chance Electronic