

Analysis paper: assignment and guidelines

An analysis paper consists of the following parts:

1. an annotated score,
2. an essay,
3. a form chart.

Annotated score

In your score, you should indicate at least a section division of the entire piece, along with identifications of all used keys and all cadences. Also, you must provide a harmonic analysis in Roman numerals of several selected passages. Choose those passages that you think are interesting from a harmonic perspective. Do not limit yourself to trivial passages only. In case you're analysing a short piece: provide a complete harmonic analysis.

Make sure your score remains easy to read. Don't clutter the score with too much information.

Essay

In your essay, you elaborate on your analysis. Your essay must be a technical-analytical discussion of the piece. You may include general historical background information, but never in replacement of an analysis. Discuss at least the following issues:

- form,
- phrase structure,
- tonal organisation, including cadences and relationships between keys,
- harmony,
- melodic-motivic organisation,
- text-music relationships (in case of vocal repertoire).

Of course, you can discuss any other issue you feel is worth discussing as well.

Although there will be some overlap between the information you provide in the essay and in the score, make sure the essay is not simply a "copy in words" of the score. For instance, instead of writing lengthy descriptions like "measure 1 starts with a motive consisting of a quarter note, two eighth notes, and two quarter notes," talk about how the composer uses the motive in the rest of the piece. Occasionally, you may find that placing a music example within your essay works very well.

The essay has to contain at least 750 words of analytical text.

Form chart

Your form chart should provide a schematic, graphical overview of the entire piece in a single page. The purpose of the form chart is to give the reader an overview of the piece as a whole in a single glance. Balance your information carefully. At least include section divisions and grouping structures, along with keys and cadences, but leave out harmonic details, unless they are very striking.

Citing sources & plagiarism

For many pieces, there are analyses available in books, journals, and on the internet. When consulting these sources, special care and attention are needed:

1. Always make your own analysis first, using the tools offered to you in the lessons. When you read existing analyses first, you run the risk of looking at the piece too much through the lens of these other analysts, which can make your analysis more or less 'second-hand' from the start.
2. After having made your own analysis, feel free to read other analyses. But always read critically. When you run into interesting additional insights or other views, you can always cite them, fitting them nicely into your own argument. But be sure
 - a) to cite only short bits, well-proportioned to the length of your own text,
 - b) to mark these citations clearly with quotation marks, to mention the author and the source (a book or journal, with pages numbers; an internet page, with the date of consulting).

A citation could look like this:

"Historians do not agree on how and when the transition from Renaissance modal polyphony to the harmonic tonality of the Baroque occurred. Harold S. Powers has even argued that modality and tonality coexist as musical properties on separate epistemological planes, in which case it is meaningless to imagine a transition from one to the other (...)"¹

Please note that (intentionally or unintentionally) failing to cite your sources constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism is a kind of fraud, and is taken very seriously by the school. In case examiners suspect plagiarism (or other forms of fraud), they have to report it to the exam board, which decides about the sanction.

Additional requirements

- All parts of the paper (score, essay, and form chart) must be submitted digitally through info@ralfpisters.nl.
- Score:
 - You can find scores in the library or on imslp.org. Use Urtext editions where possible. When analysing Mozart, use the Neue Mozart Ausgabe (freely available online).
 - The score must be submitted in a single pdf file (no separate pdf files per page).
 - The score must be submitted as a high-resolution, easy to read scanned document. Pictures of the score are only acceptable if the quality is comparable to a high-quality scan.
 - The score must have measure numbers.
- It is permitted to cooperate with at most one other student from the same group, as long as you mention this somewhere in your essay. In such a case, the two cooperating students may hand in the same score and the same form chart. Both students, however, have to write their essays individually.
- Every student (or every pair of students) must choose another piece.

¹ B. Hyer, Tonality, in *The Cambridge history of Western music theory* (ed. Th. Christensen), p. 738, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2007