

Seminars in Choral Literature
Professor Carmen Helena Téllez
Post-1900 Analysis Checklist

Part I: The general description

- Composer's name and birth/death dates
- Full title of composition in its original language and any popular translations of the title or “monikers”
- Placement in the timeline of the composer’s career, i.e. opus number and/or date of composition, publication and/or premiere; early, middle or late period as appropriate.
- Estimated duration
- Number, ranges, and type of soloists (define the voice types to the best of your ability, i.e., coloratura, lyric, dramatic, early-music, etc.)
- Source of the text, if known. If Biblical, check Book, chapter and verse; if liturgical, check service and season; if literary, check original book or poem; if anonymous/traditional, check cultural tradition, etc.
- Author of the text and his/her dates
- Language of the text
- Instrumentation as stated by the composer

Part II: The context (You may use a short essay or just keywords and timeline charts)

- Assess the inherited traditions: historical development of the genre up to the point of composition of the work
- influences by other composers
- contemporary cultural context (politics, economics, social forces, etc.)
- contemporary professional context (sponsors, musical organizations, professional issues)
- influence of other artists and disciplines (poets, painters, philosophers, etc). Is the work multi-disciplinary and owes its concept to another creator?
- aesthetic or technical innovations represented in this work
- impact the work on future compositions by the same composer or other composers.
- To which stylistic stream after 1900 do you think this work belongs? You may name more than one.

Part III: Sources and References

- Principal publisher(s)
- Scholars with influential and/or current views on this composer and/or compositions, and some central concepts in their research.

Part IV: The large-scale formal plan (Please answer in the format of an essay with a diagram. Feel free to comment about alternatives to conventional formal analysis)

- Musical ground plan for the whole work including number of movements, tonal centers for the main movements or sections; tonal relationships, such as recapitulations or symmetries; large scale use of solo/choral and instrumental forces per movement.
- In multi-sectional works, establish the overall relationship of text and music sections.
- Defining stylistic and technical achievements which rank this work as significant. (You may quote others and give your own opinions)
- Define conceptual innovations in handling large-scale form, formal narrative, formal coherence, etc.

Part V: Large Scale Analysis of Performance Issues (please answer with short and specific answers.)

- Prepare a grid of the use of instruments in each movement for rehearsal planning, if applicable. For model for this grid, go to the Choral Lit Seminar Website [HERE](#)
- Are there issues with the instrumentation of the piece—such as unusual instrumental combinations or historical, non-Western European, electronic, or otherwise non-conventional instruments?
- Discuss the ideal profile of the chorus (size, ranges, *divisi* requirements). Check the whole score, not only the opening, because *divisi* can appear anywhere.
- Discuss programming considerations (themes, seasonal applications, difficulty, practical availability of performing editions or individual performers, pieces to be paired with, interdisciplinary potential, etc.)
- Are there any issues with specialized performance practices, such as folk or urban popular styles, electro-acoustic or computer applications, multimedia components, etc.?

Part VI: Individual movement analysis.

- Analysis of the text:
 - detailed notes about the source of the text.
 - translation (poetic and word-by-word)
 - diction and IPA application
 - versification and scansion
 - large structural sections
 - significant imagery
 - central concepts expressed by the text
 - rhetorical devices

Part VII: Individual movement analysis

- Analyze the form of each movement: Musical ground plan for the whole movement, including tonal areas and relationships, symmetrical aspects, and large scale use of solo/choral and instrumental forces.
- Establish the relationship of text and music sections in a detailed way. How does the composer match the musical sections with the text sections? Are there deviations and contradictions?
- Identify thematic areas and subdivide them by component sub-themes and/or motives.
- Identify elements with melodic, rhythmic and/or harmonic profile that recur with unifying effect.
- Identify any musical and conceptual innovations.
- Analyze scales, chord progressions, textural solutions, etc. and determine important patterns that might define the style. Try to do this according to recognized compositional techniques applicable to the composer, especially if the composer is a pioneer or the best representative of a particular technique (i.e serialism, combinatoriality, octatonic scales, trans-traditional scales, sound mass, micropolyphony, minimalism, polystylism, etc.)
- Establish developmental techniques if any; or define how the composer builds length and momentum through means other than traditional sonata-form development.
- Establish how the composer creates sections, periods and phrase structures as applicable according to the individual style.
- Establish how the composer delineates the form. Consider the possibility of hybrid, through-composed, modular, symmetrical, aleatoric, or process plans if necessary, and attempt a classification or description.
- Define the effects of rhythm, timbre and/or texture on the form and emotional narrative of the movement.
- Trace all transpositions
- Define issues of rhetoric, interdisciplinary ideas if any, in large-scale plans and in small scale text painting.

Part VIII

- Rhetorical, philosophical, political and/or theological issues, if any.

Part IX- Your personal perspective

- Establish an interpretive narrative of the whole composition according to composer's style, the rhetoric of the period, and your interpretation.
- Establish conducting challenges and objectives
- If the composer wanted to make music in an innovative way, how would you define the nature of his/her innovation?
- Is this work suitable to address current cultural or social concerns?
- Is this work suitable for an innovative form of presentation? How? Would you use immersivity, interactivity, interdisciplinary languages, multimedia and/or digital technologies? What would you do?