



BRANDENBURG CONCERTO NO.5 IN D MAJOR

Johann Sebastian Bach (1721)



POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Features of Baroque Music
- The Concerto Grosso
- The features of a gigue
- The role of the harpsichord.

MOVEMENT 3

STRUCTURE:

- The movement is a large ternary structure: ABA

HARMONY AND TONALITY:

- D major.
- This key is used for most of the two A sections.
- B section: modulates to the dominant (A major) and relative minor (B minor).
- Diatonic.
- Standard chords of the time (I, IV and V, with occasional use of II and VI).
- Dominant sevenths in various inversions.
- Functional harmony.
- Mainly root position and first inversion chords.
- Perfect cadences announce the ends of sections.
- Suspensions (9-8)

CONTEXT:

- Bach is regarded as one of the greatest composers of the Baroque era.
- He worked mainly as a church organist, music director and composer in Germany.
- Bach's employer, Prince Leopold preferred not to have elaborate church music, so Bach's duties were mainly confined to secular music. He wrote much instrumental music during this time.
- Chamber Music: There was a core of 8 or 9 professional musicians who were supplemented on occasion by musicians from the town and elsewhere. Performances were held in rooms in the castle.
- The 6 Brandenburg Concertos were written between 1711 and 1720, and in 1721 were dedicated to Christian Ludwig, the Margrave of Brandenburg.

RHYTHM, METRE AND TEMPO:

- 2/4 metre: duple time –
- But music could also be notated in 6/8 compound time.
- Baroque gigue
- Triplets
- Dotted rhythms
- Semiquaver runs in harpsichord.

TEXTURE:

- Contrapuntal
- Opening in fugal style
- 2 part imitation in subject
- Flute and violin occasionally play in 3rds.
- Doubling in unison.
- Tonic pedal in bass line.

PERFORMING FORCES:

- Concerto grosso
- Continuo with figured bass
- Extended virtuoso solo part for harpsichord (unusual)
- Ripieno with 1 violin
- Concertino with flute violin and harpsichord.
- Baroque flute made of wood with finger holes and 1 metal key.
- No dynamic markings for harpsichord
- Few dynamic markings for other instruments.

MELODY:

- Mainly conjunct with some leaps
- Scalic runs, especially in harpsichord.
- Rising sequence
- Ornamentation in harpsichord. (trills)
- Appoggiaturas in main section.



DEFYING GRAVITY

Stephen Schwartz (1948-)



POINTS OF INTEREST:

- How the music reflects the on-screen action
- Word painting
- The way the orchestra is used
- The features of a 'modern' musical

FROM THE MUSICAL 'WICKED'

STRUCTURE:

- Verse-chorus form
- Within that structure this piece has multiple sections which are defined by tempo, contrasting moods and melodic material.

MELODY:

- Syllabic word setting
- Vocalisation
- Conjunct melody in the opening
- Use of enjambement
- Verse and chorus combine conjunct and angular leaps in the melody.
- Leaps often feature rising 5th.
- Large leaps: Compound perfect 4th and 5th.
- Leitmotif: 'Unlimited' uses same 7 notes from 'Somewhere over the Rainbow', changing the rhythm.

CONTEXT:

- American music theatre composer and lyricist.
- In 2003 he worked on Wicked, a musical based on the novel. This is an alternative version of the Wizard of Oz and tells the story from the point of view of the witches, Elphaba (the Wicked Witch of the West) and Glinda, the Good Witch. Schwartz won a Grammy Award for this work.
- 'Defying Gravity' appears at the end of the 1st act when Elphaba discovers that the Wizard of Oz is not the heroic figure she had originally believed him to be. She vows to do everything in her power to fight him and his sinister plans.
- She sings of how she wants to live without limits, going against the rules that others have set for her.

RHYTHM, METRE AND TEMPO:

- Frequent tempo changes
- Ralls. usually followed by an a tempo.
- Syncopation
- Dotted rhythms
- Triplets
- Mainly crotchets and quavers
- Off-beat entries
- Rests break up phrases
- Fermatas
- Speech-like rhythms

PERFORMING FORCES:

- Vocal duet
- They sing, sing/speak and speak at different points.
- Large vocal range of nearly 2 octaves
- Large orchestra scored as an orchestral reduction.
- Wide variety of percussion with cymbal rolls.
- Electric guitars use overdrive.
- Fanfare-like brass
- Tremolo string effect.

HARMONY AND TONALITY:

- Tonally ambiguous opening with chromatic movement and unrelated chord progressions.
- In D major
- Modulations to B major, F major, G major and B minor.
- Chords are in root position
- Chord progressions often unrelated
- Parallel semitone shifts
- Some dissonance
- Pedal notes

TEXTURE:

- Opening: Sparse texture with instrumental chord stabs, some monophony.
- Verses: Melody-dominated homophony
- Homophonic chordal moments
- Ostinato accompaniment
- Unison singing
- Voices sometimes sing in 3rds.
- Ending: Contrapuntal with 3 different musical ideas with different lyrics



KILLER QUEEN

Queen (1974)



POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Adventurous structure for rock/pop music.
- The use of music technology
- Carefully crafted guitar solo.
- The sense of 'theatricality'

FROM THE ALBUM 'SHEER HEART ATTACK'

STRUCTURE:

- Verse-chorus form
- Instrumental
- Guitar solo
- Outro

HARMONY AND TONALITY:

- Eb major.
- Opening in C minor and closing on an Eb major chord, the tonality is ambiguous at times.
- Many passing modulations, strengthened by perfect cadences but often followed by parallel shifts, moving to a new key.
- Most chords are in root position.
- Some chords in 1st or 2nd inversion.
- Some dissonance
- Seventh chords
- Circle of fifths
- Altered and extended chords
- Pedal notes

CONTEXT:

- Written by Freddie Mercury and appears on Queen's 3rd studio album Sheer Heart Attack in 1974.
- Freddie Mercury: Born in 1946 in Zanzibar, Africa (now Tanzania) and grew up in India, where he started learning the piano at age 7. At 17 he moved to England.
- Queen: Formed in London in 1970 with singer Freddie Mercury, guitarist Brian May, drummer Roger Taylor and bassist John Deacon.
- Killer Queen: The first single from the album and one of the few songs where Freddie Mercury wrote the lyrics first, which are about an upper-class prostitute. 'Killer Queen' reached number 2 in the British charts and provided them with their first top 20 hit in the US, peaking at number 12 on the Billboard singles chart.

RHYTHM, METRE AND TEMPO:

- Moderato tempo with a dotted crotchet pulse of 112 beats per minute.
- 12/8 compound quadruple time.
- Swung feel
- Occasionally bar of 6/8
- Anacrusis
- Syncopation
- Triplets

MELODY:

- Syllabic text setting.
- Backing vocals use a mixture of words and vocalisation
- Mostly conjunct with small leaps of a 3rd or 4th.
- Altered descending sequence.
- Leaps often feature a rising major sixth
- Some exceptionally large leaps such as an 8ve.

PERFORMING FORCES:

- Freddie Mercury is a high male voice – tenor.
- Lead and backing vocals, piano, honky tonk piano, 4 electric guitars, bass guitar and drum kit.
- Guitar techniques: slides, bends, pull-offs and vibrato.
- Recording techniques and effects including multi-tracking, EQ, flanger, distortion, reverb, wah-wah, panning and overdubbing

TEXTURE:

- Main texture is homophonic.
- Imitation.
- Layering
- Three-part texture during guitar solo.
- Panning
- Antiphony



MUSIC FOR A WHILE

Henry Purcell (1659-95)



POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Word painting
- Baroque features
- The theatrical aspect of the music
- Ground bass

STRUCTURE:

- Ground bass (basso ostinato) structure
- Sense of ternary form da capo aria

HARMONY AND TONALITY:

- A minor
- Tierce de Picardie at the end
- Chromatic and non-diatonic ground bass makes tonality sometimes ambiguous.
- Modulations to Em, G, C, and A.
- Modulations confirmed by perfect cadences.
- Diatonic and functional chords.
- Cadential 6-4
- Occasional suspenses (4-3)
- Dissonances on words like 'pain'.
- False relation

CONTEXT:

- Henry Purcell was an English Baroque composer. He was the organist at Westminster Abbey in 1679, and became the organist at the Chapel Royal in 1682, holding both posts simultaneously.
- Started composing at a young age and in his short life, dying at just 36, he wrote a vast amount of music both sacred and secular.
- 'Music for a While' is the 2nd of 4 movements written as incidental music for John Dryden's play based on the legend of Sophocles' Oedipus.
- Comes from Greek mythology and is a tragic story about the title character killing his father to marry his mother before committing suicide.
- Song features the character Alecto, a medusa-like goddess whose job was to punish those who had committed sins, specifically the crime of killing a parent. It is the music which calms Alecto until she drops her whip and the snakes fall from her head.

RHYTHM, METRE AND TEMPO:

- Slow tempo
- 4/4 metre
- Mostly quavers and semiquavers
- Dotted rhythms
- Occasional syncopation and offbeat rhythms
- Ground bass entirely in quavers.

TEXTURE:

- Melody dominated homophony
- Accompaniment provided by ground bass.
- Right hand of harpsichord provides counterpoint with vocal line.

PERFORMING FORCES:

- For voice (tenor) and continuo
- Right hand part of harpsichord highly decorative and improvisatory.
- Chords frequently arpeggiated
- Ground bass played by left hand of harpsichord and bass viol.

MELODY:

- Range of a 9th
- Mostly conjunct lines.
- Passing notes
- Leaps are small and generally no greater than a perfect fourth
- Rests are used to break up phrases.
- Some descending sequences
- Extensive use of ornaments in both the soprano line and the right hand of the harpsichord:
 - Trills, appoggiaturas, grace notes, mordents.



MAIN TITLE/REBEL BLOCKADE RUNNER

John Williams (1932-)



POINTS OF INTEREST:

- How the music reflects the on-screen action.
- How the music reflects the feeling of 'space'
- Features of film music.
- The Leitmotif
- Romantic treatment of orchestra

STAR WARS EPISODE IV: A NEW HOPE

STRUCTURE:

- Structure matches and reinforces the opening section of the film.
- Main theme: AABA shape. with 4 bar sections.
- The remainder of the extract takes its shape from the narrative/action on the screen.

HARMONY AND TONALITY:

- Bb major
- Modulation to C major.
- Moments of almost atonality
- Complex chords and dissonance
- Elements of bitonality
- Few conventional cadence points
- Quartal harmony
- Root and 1st inversion chords
- Tertiary relationship between chords
- Tritone

CONTEXT:

- John Williams is widely considered to be one of the greatest film composers of all time. He has won 5 oscars so far and been nominated for many awards.
- He re-popularised the use of grand late-Romantic orchestral scores when the genre was under threat from contemporary and pop-influenced styles. His musical technique is in the likes of Max Steiner, with a late nineteenth century approach to melody, harmony and orchestration.
- Used the Romantic device of Leitmotif.
- The opening theme is associated with Luke Skywalker, and with ideas of heroism and struggle.

RHYTHM, METRE AND TEMPO:

- Opening section: fast tempo
- Fanfare rhythms: repeated notes and triplets
- Main theme uses strong quadruple pulse, later on it becomes ambiguous, moments of triple metre.
- Homorhythmic chords in passage similar to 'Mars' from 'The Planets'.
- Ostinato figure towards end.

TEXTURE:

- Homophonic textures: block chord, arpeggios and rhythmic articulation of chords accompaniment
- Inverted and dominant pedals.
- Ostinatos

PERFORMING FORCES:

- Full symphony orchestra with much doubling of parts.
- Thickly scored
- Avoids the use of electronic instruments, strange for a film in the 1970s with a futuristic theme.

MELODY:

- Memorable melodies
- Opening 3 bar fanfare figure
- Use of sequence
- Theme made up of 2 ideas: Theme A and B.
- A: 4 bars to repeated to form 8 bar phrase. Stepwise motion and leaps, auxiliary figure, rising 5th idea.
- B: Anacrusis, triplet figures, contrary motion.



SAMBA EM PRELUDIO

Esperanza Spalding (1984-)



POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Features of Bossa nova
- Features of Samba and Latin American styles
- Virtuosity of bass guitar
- Jazz influence

FROM THE ALBUM 'ESPERANZA'

STRUCTURE:

- Introduction
- Verse 1
- Link
- Verse 2
- Guitar solo
- Voice and bass duet
- Coda

HARMONY AND TONALITY:

- B minor tonality
- Bossa novas typically use minor keys.
- Tonal
- Jazz influence in complex harmony.
- Roots of chords based around I, II, IV and V.
- Chord extensions
- Diminished 7th
- Flattened 5th
- Chromatic chords
- Chord progressions create descending chromatic line.

CONTEXT:

- Esperanza plays violin and bass and studied at the Berklee School of Music.
- Has worked as a soloist and session player. Best known for 4 solo albums.
- Has won 4 Grammy awards. Her own compositions show influences from jazz, blues, funk and Latin-American music – especially Brazilian styles.
- The song and its genre 'Samba Em Preludio', written in 1962, is a bossa nova.
- 'Bossa nova' was one of the most popular musical styles of the late 1950s and early 1960s. The style mixes elements of Brazilian samba with jazz.
- Samba is the national dance style of Brazil, known for energetic drumming and syncopated rhythms and is an essential part of the carnival held every year in the streets.

RHYTHM, METRE AND TEMPO:

- Starts with a slow tempo and rubato.
- Tempo doubles with bossa nova tempo.
- Triplets
- Syncopation
- Bossa nova type rhythms: dotted crotchet and quaver pairs.

TEXTURE:

- Monophonic introduction – apart from a couple of double stops.
- Mostly homophonic texture, at times bass part becomes melodic enough for there to be two melodies at once.
- Some polyphonic moments.
- Imitation.

PERFORMING FORCES:

- Esperanza sing and plays acoustic bass guitar.
- Also include acoustic guitar and simplified 2nd acoustic guitar in solo.
- Low vocal tessitura with chest voice.
- Minor tenth range.
- Active bass part, virtuosic bass solo., almost 'ragtime-like', ornamentation, double stopping, harmonics, wide leaps, rapid passages.

MELODY:

- 2 main melodies
- Melody 1: Rising arpeggio shape, sequence, melody moves by leaps of 3rd and 7th, jazzy flattened 5th
- Melody 2: doubled note values, conjunct, rising and falling idea, sequence.
- Syllabic word setting.