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Analysis

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Analysis.

A general definition of the term as implied in common parlance might be: that part of the study of music that takes as its starting-point the music itself, rather than external factors. More formally, analysis may be said to include the interpretation of structures in music, together with their resolution into relatively simpler constituent elements, and the investigation of the relevant functions of those elements. In such a process the musical 'structure' may stand for part of a work, a work in its entirety, a group or even a repertory of works, in a written or oral tradition. The relationship between the structures and elements proposed by analysis, and experiential, generative and documentary perspectives on music, has circumscribed analysis differently from time to time and from place to place, and has aroused debate. Less controversially, a practical distinction is often drawn between formal analysis and stylistic analysis; but this is unnecessary insofar as on the one hand any musical complex, no matter how small or large, may be deemed a 'style'; and on the other hand, all the comparative processes that characterize stylistic analysis are inherent in the basic analytical activity of resolving structures into elements.

I. GENERAL

II. HISTORY

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