

### **T251, Fall 2018 / Project 3**

*Analysis of Mozart, Piano Sonata in C minor, K.457, I.*

*Due Monday, 12/3*

The basic aims of this analysis project are fourfold:

- (1) To annotate the score to show the main sonata sections, cadences, and themes (together with any important modulations).
- (2) To explain concisely how the recapitulation compares to the exposition.
- (3) To demonstrate the ability to distinguish important harmonic events from local embellishment by sketching an annotated bassline for the development section.
- (4) To write some analytical prose (2-3 pages) exploring the issue of “contrast” in the sonata.

These tasks are explained in more detail below. In grading, they will be weighted 25%, 10%, 25%, 40%, respectively.

- (1) Annotate the score to show the main sonata sections (exposition, development, recapitulation) and themes (P, TR, S, C), together with important cadence points and modulations.
  - Notice the chord m. 8: can this be a cadence? If not, where is the first genuine PAC? As a result, P can be described as an expanded version of which phrase-type: period or sentence?
  - The theme beginning in m. 36 can also be described as an expanded period or sentence. Where is the first really decisive PAC after m. 36?
- (2) On a separate piece of paper, in a few sentences, explain briefly how the recapitulation differs from the exposition. Where is the first major adjustment? What is its function? Describe in simple terms the principle that relates mm. 129-168 with mm. 34-74. What is the function of the section from m. 168 to the end?
- (3) Write a sketch of the development bassline (mm. 75-99), focusing on the main harmonic outlines. Use barlines and represent the governing harmonies with their proper rhythmic duration. Provide a harmonic analysis for any bass-note you include (you might need to indicate key changes or regions that belong to a particular key), and annotate your sketch in any other way you think useful. For most of the development, you should find a change of harmony roughly every two to four measures. Your response can be handwritten or made via notation software.
  - The main challenge with this task is deciding what level of detail to include. As an example, below is the passage from mm. 79-80 (the local key is F minor). Levels (A) and (B) show the surface and its reduction to a quarter-note bass line—both of them too fussy for our purposes, since the basic harmonies are moving much more slowly (the second and fourth quarter notes are understood as chordal skips). Level (C) gives the harmonic movement at the half-note level, and shows that the dominant-family second half note in each bar elaborates an underlying tonic (F minor), which moves from 5/3 to 6/3 position from one bar to the next. Level (D) shows the basic F minor harmony for these measures

(5/3 here because that's the position that begins this phrase unit). For our purposes level (D) is adequate; the harmonic shape of the development will emerge most clearly at this level. Aim for something like this (although an annotated level (C) is perfectly fine too).

(K.457, I, mm. 79-80)

(A)

(B) *cs = chromatic step*

(C)

(D)

- Note that “governing harmony” doesn’t necessarily mean “root position chord”; it could include an inversion (so, for instance, mm. 76-77 would have a B $\flat$  in the bass).
  - If you want further examples, look at the attached reductions of the development sections in the Piano Concerto in C, K.467, and the String Quartet in D minor, K.421, although both are probably a little more complicated than you need to produce (especially K.421). You *don’t* need to include melody lines.
- (4) 2-3 page essay on the issue of “contrast” in the sonata. This sonata is frequently interpreted as among the most overtly “dramatic” of Mozart’s piano sonatas. One important way of creating musical drama is through opposition and contrast. Write 2-3 pages of analytical prose that explores this connection between drama and contrast in the movement. Elements that might articulate contrast could include keys, mode (major/minor), harmonies, dynamics, texture, register, character, gesture, passages of stability or instability, etc. Some organizational strategies:
- *Don’t* just list every contrasting element you can think of. Be selective and try to organize your thoughts around a theme or topic. Do you feel there is a narrative thread running through the piece? Do you hear a dramatic scene unfolding? What animates or motivates the movement? How do the elements of contrast relate to the form of the piece? What do you make of the way the movement ends?
  - A good idea would be to constrain the focus by looking at a single section, such as the exposition (useful because it contains the principal contrast of mode between P and S and sets out the main thematic materials for the piece).
  - Alternatively, you can try to tell the “story” of the piece from beginning to end. In general, the more terrain you cover the fewer specific parameters you can incorporate.

- In any case, avoid the blow-by-blow account: “in m.1 loud arpeggios in C minor occur, then in m. 3 softer music appears, then in m. 5 the loud arpeggios come back, followed in m. 7 by the softer music again, before a pedal-point appears in m. 9. [Etc.]” Assume the reader can hear the music and doesn’t need you to translate the sounds into prose: your job is *to shape the reader’s experience of the piece*, to select details you think are important for the point you want to make.

Your 2-3 pages should be double-spaced, using 12-pt type. Be imaginative, and assume that quality of prose matters.

Please note that this is *not* a research project: you do not need to consult extra sources. Indeed, most accounts and characterizations of this piece that are available online through an average Google search—i.e., not in scholarly books—are generally terrible, and less than helpful. However, if you do make use of any external materials, you *must* make clear what is your thinking and what has been spurred by these external materials. If you borrow someone else’s words—no matter how briefly—you must place them in quotations and cite the source. Any breach of this basic scholarly habit of attribution will be treated with the utmost seriousness. If you are in *any* doubt, err on the side of caution.

If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism, please read this page:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

Writing assistance is available from Writing Tutorial Service (WTS), which is located in Ballantine 206 (855 6738).