

Hearing Form: Musical Analysis with and without the Score

Anthology for Hearing Form: Musical Analysis with and without the Score

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Components

Hearing Form comprises three components: a textbook/workbook, an anthology, and online instructor resources.

1. *Hearing Form: Musical Analysis with and without the Score* (henceforth HF) consists of eight chapters, four appendices, and an integrated workbook. Of the 249-page total, the workbook occupies the final 100 pages.
2. A separate 466-page companion volume, *Anthology for Hearing Form: Musical Analysis with and without the Score* (henceforth AFHF), includes the scores of more than sixty compositions.
3. Upon registration with the publisher, teachers gain access to instructor resources, which include an instructor manual, a test bank, and audio streaming and downloads.

Both volumes are US letter size (8.5 x 11 inches/22 x 28 cm) and feature attractive plasticized covers that ought to hold up well during the likely period of student use. HF is perfect bound and can be opened with ease. The volume responds well to the creasing required to keep it open. The page design is a simple, clean grayscale. Graphics, including diagrams and notation, are cleanly displayed, and are interspersed throughout the text. Chapters and other forms of hierarchical segmentation are clearly delineated and highlight important items such as listening strategies, in-depth expansion, assignments, and the like. Many pages are text-dense, which can seem daunting to learners, particularly those for whom English is a second language. But portions likely to encompass a single assignment are usually quite manageable.

Workbook pages cannot be easily removed when turning in an assignment. Of course, students could photograph their work and upload a PDF to a course dropbox. The book would remain intact, a plus, but would contain no record of teacher comments, a minus. Few students would take steps to reconcile this discrepancy. If workbook pages were perforated and the book three-hole punched, assignments with teacher comments could be easily reassembled. Working with paper copies, however old-fashioned, would also ensure students had purchased the book, and not simply downloaded blank PDFs from illicit internet sources.

AFHF is bound using a plastic-coated spiral. It opens easily and lays flat on both a desk or a music stand, which maximizes its utility as a practical resource. Most compositions appear crisp and easy to read, but the printing of some works was blurry, probably due to the porous quality of the paper. For example, the Trio from Joplin's "Maple Leaf Rag," Vivaldi's "Summer," and Schubert's "Heidenröslein" were challenging to read. In addition to musical scores, AFHF includes relevant poetic texts and their translations, which is a helpful convenience.

AFHF contains more than sixty works. One third of these works belong to the "Three Bs": Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms. Adding eight works by Mozart completes half the volume. In terms of historically underrepresented composers, there are two songs by Josephine Lang, two by Fanny Hensel, Joplin's "Maple Leaf Rag," and one song by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. A fourth edition would surely feature a more diverse representation. It is significant to note that HF contains many examples that do not appear in the anthology and they represent a more diverse body of literature.

Cost

Considering the wealth of resources provided, the price of these materials is quite reasonable by present standards. As of August 2023, if purchased directly from the publisher, the two-volume pair costs \$100. (HF lists for \$55 with a 20% back-to-school discount for a total of \$44. AFHF lists for \$70 and with the 20% back-to-school discount, the price is \$56.) The materials may also be purchased as a package from online retailers, such as Amazon, which lists a two-volume package for \$105.¹

1 A word of caution regarding textbook rentals: Retailers permit rental at a lower cost to students. However, renting these volumes would be problematic because one hundred pages of HF are a workbook, as is potentially every page of AFHF. Students fortunate enough to obtain a pristine rental copy will either write on these pages and create a problem for the next renter, or worse, simply photocopy pages and turn in the copies. Besides violating copyright law, this denies both author and publisher their rightful earnings. Unlucky renters who receive a defaced volume can ask for an exchange, but the wait for a replacement can result in days or weeks of missed work.

Scope, Audience, Limitations, and Curricular Possibilities

Clearly stated on the opening page and in the chapter contents, the essential focus of HF is eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European art music for an audience of undergraduate music majors. The materials do include limited excursions into other music, such as the blues, for example, which appears in the chapter on variations. Thus, for some, its scope will be too narrow and dated, particularly in situations where the topic of form may occupy only a tragically small corner of one's curriculum. To be sure, there is much to be learned from what is here. But almost certainly there will be both the desire and the need for something more—especially works of all kinds from the last century or so, and especially more of those of women and people of color, as well as popular and folk examples from around the world. For many potential adopters, this deficit may prove insurmountable.

There are several ways in which HF might be deployed in one's curriculum. The most obvious is its stated purpose—as the materials for a one-term form class that focuses on common-practice European art music. If one's musicianship text does not include adequate materials for teaching form, HF could also be distributed into a three- or four-semester undergraduate curriculum, matching, for example, the initial chapters on phrase and phrase structure with a first semester course, and so on. The materials would be useful as part of a graduate review class or as individual-study preparation for graduate-school placement or qualifying examinations. For those teachers who cannot offer a class in form, the materials are friendly enough they could be used for independent study by students who meet the qualifications typical of those required for such an enrollment. AFHF can serve as a stand-alone anthology of common-practice works.

Authorial Voice

An outstanding feature of the book is its authorial voice. Every page speaks with a care and kindness that is tempered by the experience of a seasoned professional. There is never an instance where the reader feels cowed into thinking “this and only this is the way it must be done.” Rather, the author acknowledges differences in the points of view among fellow professionals and explains them in a welcoming manner, such as in the discussions surrounding cadences in Chapter 1. In fact, the author leans into William Caplin's gestural approach. In many ways this may be viewed as

advantageous, but many teachers will no doubt insist on more rigor and desire clearer guidance as to how one determines the bounds of a musical phrase.

Organization

The contents of Chapters 1–8 are Phrases and Cadences; Phrase Organization; One Part, Binary, and Ternary Forms; Sonata Forms; Variation Forms; Imitative Forms; Concerto Forms; and Rondo Forms, respectively. Appendices I–IV are Formal Models; Making a Phrase Diagram; Reading a Transposition Score; and Answers to Self-Tests, respectively. In order to provide a general sense of how chapters are organized, I will examine Chapter 6, Imitative Forms, in some detail.

Each chapter begins with an introduction. Here the introduction immediately confronts the assertion in the chapter title that canons, inventions, and fugues are forms, noting that some musicians consider these to be procedural. The paragraph concludes by stating that “if one considers musical form a way of understanding large-scale repetition, variation, and development in a work, then the term ‘form’ still seems appropriate.” There is a brief discussion of canon. It begins with the simple children’s rounds “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” and “Frère Jacques” before assuring students that this type of work can also be sublime, as realized in Bach’s *Goldberg Variations*. A brief overview of Bach’s Invention No. 1 illustrates important terms and techniques. As is typical in each chapter, the work appears in AFHF and on a recording. A highlighted in-class activity directs students to listen to the work and bracket every instance of the motive’s head and tail before comparing their work with classmates.

Before homework is assigned, Santa provides five tips for analyzing harmonic progressions in polyphonic music. Some suggestions guide students to examine the rhythm, which epitomizes the practicality of the advice. The combination of the in-class activity and the tips will help students complete Homework 1, the analysis of Bach’s Invention No. 13.

The next chapter segment deals with fugue and follows a structure similar to that for invention. After a brief explanation of exposition and episode there is discussion of the nature of subject and answer as well as the potential for a countersubject. The author provides listening strategies (“Hearing Fugues”) that ask musicians to shift their focus to foreground the subject and brief suggestions for how one might rehearse fugues. The in-class activity for fugue mirrors that for invention, and students are directed to AFHF for Bach’s Fugue in F major? from the *Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I*. The homework assignment asks students to label the score with the relevant terms.

A brief discussion of the difficulties in analyzing fugue precedes a mix of other related topics (e.g., fugato and non-episodic fugues) interspersed among nine additional homework assignments. The first six are based on the overture to Handel's *Messiah*, Hindemith's B-flat Fugue from *Ludus Tonalis*, Pachelbel's *Canon in D*, Bach's Fugue in G minor from the *WTC, Book I*, and the fugato from Beethoven's Symphony No. 7, respectively. Assignments 9–10 implore students to “choose your own” fugue from common-practice literature. Assignment 11 is a 1–2-page creative essay that invites the comparison of fugue structure to that of a dialog from a film or play.

The chapter concludes with a self-test, the answers for which appear in Appendix IV. There is a chapter review, which consists of a 12-point summary of important concepts. Conscientious students will likely keep copies of these chapter reviews together as a study guide for a final examination or to help prepare for graduate examinations. The chapter structure is logical and thoughtful and again, the authorial voice is inviting. Experienced teachers will likely view each chapter as the outline for a series of lesson plans. As is customary, students must rely on a teacher's experience and guidance in addition to what the book provides. It is possible to use what is here with great success. That said, there are opportunities to build on the book's strengths that could make the approach more interactive. Permit me to illustrate the idea by way of analogy.

To this day, much music pedagogy remains analogous to discussing photographs: This is a car. These are its wheels, doors, and windows. A concealed engine powers it. Cars are controlled by a person who sits inside, steers it with a wheel, and uses their feet to make it stop and go. Teachers might play a video of a moving car or even offer learners a ride in the back seat. But is this approach enough to satisfy the curiosity—or more important—the desire of a teenager? Wouldn't most teens prefer the view from behind the steering wheel in order to drive it and their friends wherever they wish to go? As an in-class activity, couldn't students test drive a round by performing it, then look under the hood of its intervallic and harmonic structure to understand what makes it go? For homework, couldn't they build their own little go-carts, imitating imitation, as it were? During the next class period, couldn't they take these for a spin, drive them “a-round” so to speak?

With a form textbook in hand, won't students wonder whether canon, invention, and fugue are alive and well today? Won't they wonder whether works like these appear in the music of their lifetime? Would they know that Ingrid Michaelson's 2008 hit, “The Chain,” features lovely canonic imitation that is easily discernible by ear? And, of course, teachers can help make such connections. But what can our textbooks

do in this regard? Given HF's stated pedagogical scope, these may not be fair questions. However, it is useful to remind ourselves that what we frame can matter as much as how we frame it.