

Dictation by Template: A New Approach for the Aural Skills Classroom^{1*}

BY JONATHAN GUEZ

CECILY: I delight in taking down from dictation. I have reached ‘absolute perfection’. You can go on. I am quite ready for more.

ALGERNON [somewhat taken aback]: Ahem! Ahem!

CECILY: Oh, don’t cough, Ernest. When one is dictating one should speak fluently and not cough. Besides, I don’t know how to spell a cough.²

Abstract

This article proposes a new approach to dictation based on using templates, essentially carefully designed worksheets that direct students’ eyes and ears toward relevant musical phenomena as they listen to commercial recordings. Taking dictation from templates, I argue, allows the exercise to work in service of higher order learning goals such as (1) familiarizing the student with real repertoire and compositional styles, (2) exposing students to musical recordings and offering a vocabulary for discussing them, and (3) privileging the role of sounding music in the path toward understanding music-theoretical concepts. It also provides a broadly humanistic approach to dictation that connects the sounding stuff of music to concepts that are often left to be studied on their own in written theory courses. It thus represents a reevaluation of the role of aural skills in leading the student toward mastery of theoretical, historical, and philosophical concepts.



A story you may have heard about the young Mozart is that one day, while traveling in the Vatican with his father, he heard Gregorio Allegri’s gorgeous *Miserere*, a late-Renaissance style a cappella work for double choir based on the text of Psalm 51 (*Miserere mei, Deus*, or “Have mercy on me, O God”). The piece, written in the 1630s, was sung exclusively in the Sistine Chapel (see Example 1) and only during the Tenebrae services of Holy Week.

It was forbidden to perform it anywhere outside the Sistine Chapel, for which reason—on penalty of excommunication from the church—it was likewise forbidden to transcribe the score. Nevertheless, after hearing the polyphonic work performed one Wednesday morning in 1770, young Wolfgang, who is shown in Example 2, left

^{1*} I thank the anonymous reviewers at the *Journal of Music Theory Pedagogy* for insightful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

² Wilde (1986, 286).

the chapel, gathered together some manuscript paper, and wrote it down in full from memory. He was fourteen.³



Example 1

The Sistine Chapel

© Governatorato SCV – Direzione dei Musei
(from a Google image search)



Example 2

The 13- or 14-year-old Mozart. The portrait was painted in Italy in 1770 while Mozart was on the tour described above. It is attributed to the Rococo artist Giambettino Cignaroli.
(From Wikipedia)

As students of music theory (and readers of this journal) know, far from being superhuman, what the puckish young Mozart was doing when he translated the choral sounds that he heard in the Sistine chapel into music notation is done every day in college classrooms across America, if not quite at the same level of difficulty or illegality. The activity is of course called “dictation,” and, along with sight singing (which is essentially the reverse exercise), it is one of the two most entrenched components of college aural skills curricula.⁴ In this article, I propose an approach to dictation that involves using templates, essentially worksheets that direct students’ eyes and ears toward particular musical phenomena as they listen to recordings. Dictation templates—designed to hone exactly the set of seemingly preternatural skills that Mozart drew upon to write

3 His father, Leopold, wrote home to his wife on April 14, 1770: “You have often heard of the famous Miserere in Rome, which is so greatly prized that the performers in the chapel are forbidden on pain of excommunication to take away a single part of it, to copy it or to give it to anyone. *But we have it already.* Wolfgang has written it down” (Anderson 1989, 187). For a colorful reading of the “subversive force” of this act and the “*phonographic* power of active, expert hearing,” see Szendy (2008, 9–10).

4 See Karpinski (2000a, 6 and 62). Elsewhere (2000b, [5.1]), Karpinski sketches a history of this dualism stretching back to Guido of Arezzo’s “advocacy of teaching devices such as solmization.” Dictation is now the only listening skill mentioned as a requirement by the National Association of Schools of Music, the primary accrediting agency for post-secondary schools in America. For more on the centrality of dictation to aural skills curricula, see Baker, et al. (2018) and Chenette (2020, [1.2]).

down Allegri's famous *Miserere*—have revitalized the practice of dictation in my aural skills classroom. My experience using them suggests that they inspire better and more musical results than other ways of approaching dictation.

Before beginning, I should clarify my position on dictation. I do so by taking two stances on it, one less controversial and one more so. The less controversial stance is that dictation's privileged position as the most common ear-training exercise in the college classroom is justified. The slow, careful, and repetitive listening it encourages has been shown by many scholars to aid in developing several musical and extramusical skills. Many of us, with Gary S. Karpinski, take for granted that confronting a passage of music with the goal of writing it down enhances listening skills, sharpens short- and long-term musical memory, hones musical understanding, and develops notational competency.⁵ "Each of these skills," he adds, "is necessary for survival not only in the aural skills classroom but in the musical world at large" (1990a, 221).⁶ Dictation, then, is a crucial tool in the budding musician's shed; sharpening it is a process that affords musical, intellectual, and professional benefits.

The more controversial stance I take is that though the use of dictation is justified in aural skills courses, its potential to train the ears, the intellect, and the person is rarely fully realized. Too often, it seems that aural skills textbooks reduce dictation to the apish ability to transcribe notes and rhythms from an audible signal, with no attempt to connect these skills to musicianship broadly speaking, not to mention the understanding of compositional, music-theoretical, or performance practice. My approach to dictation using templates seeks to remediate this state of affairs by framing dictation, not simply as a way to hone the ear as some dumb bodily organ—as if it were unmoored to the rest of our consciousness—but rather as an activity that serves as a springboard for higher order learning goals such as (1) familiarizing students with real repertoire and compositional style, (2) exposing students to musical recordings and offering a vocabulary for discussing them, and (3) privileging the role of sounding music in the path toward understanding theoretical concepts.

5 See Karpinski (2000a, 62). Cf. Karpinski (1990, 222): "Dictation helps to develop attentive hearing, short-term musical memory, focused concentration on specific passages, and an understanding of the fundamentals of pulse, meter, and tonality, as well as traditional notions of rhythm and pitch discrimination and notation." And (192): "melodic dictation—when properly taught—can be the best means of developing [hearing, memory, understanding, and notation] as a preliminary to applying them to a variety of listening situations at more advanced levels."

6 Karpinski (2000a, 142) adumbrates but unfortunately does not say more about a further benefit of dictation, namely that, unique among the exercises typically given in aural skills courses, it has the potential to instill a deep and lasting love for music.

All this and more, I suggest, can be achieved by providing students with a well-crafted dictation template designed to direct the student's attention to whatever musical processes or structural details may be appropriate to a particular place in the curriculum. I piloted the use of such dictation templates in the core curriculum at the College of Wooster between 2017 and 2021, where they led to improvements in literacy and musicianship, wider repertorial knowledge, increased student participation, and deeper understanding of theoretical concepts. Since the templates connect the sounding "stuff" of music to issues often left to be studied in written theory courses, this represents, if not a reversal of the typical approach to teaching music theory and aural skills, then at least a reevaluation of the role of dictation in leading the student toward mastery of theoretical, historical, and philosophical concepts.⁷ Understanding of musical concepts (and acquisition of the attendant theoretical vocabulary) is still taken to be a primary curricular goal, but the process toward understanding begins with, and is at every stage enhanced by, the music itself.

I have developed some 300 dictation templates for use in the core theory curriculum, in repertoires ranging from pre-tonal musics through the common practice, to various post-tonal musics, rock, pop, blues, jazz, musical theater, top 40, film music, R&B, and more. Here, I provide a sample of six templates along with a defense of their pedagogical methods. The structure of the article is as follows: In the following section, I provide an example dictation template, list its novel features, and give an abbreviated discussion of how these facilitate student understanding. In third section, I provide a more complete discussion of the benefits of the approach, connecting these to research on aural skills acquisition and pedagogy. The final section is addressed to instructors and lists some ways to integrate the templates into theory and aural skills classes.

An Example Template

Example 3 shows the template for the opening period of Schubert's song "Am Meer," from *Schwanengesang*, which is appropriate for a first- or second-semester dictation exercise.

⁷ Chenette (2020, [1.4]) notes the problem of founding aural skills curricula on music theory curricula, which leads to a priority of "the *logical* over the *perceptual*" (his emphasis).

09. Melodic Dictation (+ bass line + Roman numerals + cadences)

Schubert, “Am Meer,” from *Schwanengesang* (1828)

Notate the vocal melody for this song, which was written in the final year of Schubert's life (1828) and included in his song cycle called *Schwanengesang* (Swan Song). Remember that in vocal music, changes of syllables are always denoted by an individual flag and never by a beam.

If there is time, also notate elements of the bass line, add Roman numerals, and label the cadences. Then consider:

- What is the form of the piece's central 8-measures (mm. 3–10)?¹
- What do you make of the introductory two chords? Is their voice leading smooth or disjunct?
- What dramatic effect do these chromaticisms have on the placid diatonic music that follows?²
- Find a musical echo. (Remember, echoes are sometimes quieter than the music that they repeat.)
- What is the relationship between the top voice (pinky) of the piano right hand and the vocal line?
- Do you see any indications to get *louder*? What dramatic effect does this have on the piece? Is the singer in the recording able to bring it off?

Text (by Heinrich Heine):

Das Meer erglänzte weit hinaus
Im letzten Abendscheine;
Wir saßen am einsamen Fischerhaus,
Wir saßen stumm und alleine.

The sea sparkled far and wide
In the last glow of evening;
We sat at the lonely fisherman's hut,
We sat silent and alone.

¹ Regarding the form and affect of this passage, instructors and interested students may consult Stephen Rodgers, “Schubert's Idyllic Periods,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 39/2 (2017): 223–246.

² Joseph Kerman referred to this introduction as “an unforgettable, enigmatic solemnity, which seems to plumb infinite marine and spiritual depths.” Its formal function has been superseded by its status as “oracle”: “From the Classical point of view, the introduction is nonfunctional; it illuminates nothing. But from the Romantic point of view it suggests everything—everything in the world that is inward, sentient, and arcane.” See Kerman, “A Romantic Detail in Schubert's *Schwanengesang*,” *The Musical Quarterly* 48/1 (1962): 40.

Example 3

Cover Sheet and Template for “Am Meer,” from Schubert's *Schwanengesang* (1828)

Sehr langsam.
(Very slowly.)

start here

rhythm and articulation:

Singsstimme.

Das Meer er-glänz-te__ weit hin-aus im letz-ten A-bend schei-ne wir

Pianoforte.

p

pp

moltto legato

7

sas-sen am ein-sam-en Fi-scher-haus, wir sas-sen stumm und al-lei-ne.

ppp

Example 3 (cont'd)

Cover Sheet and Template for "Am Meer," from Schubert's *Schwanengesang* (1828)

The template itself is preceded by a cover sheet that introduces the piece and describes the task. At first glance, one may be struck by the resemblance of the exercise to the sort of dictation that most of us already do: the student is to supply the missing part or parts of a piece based on a set of instructions—albeit here, while listening to a recorded performance of the piece of music.⁸ There are, however, numerous differences from the way we traditionally do dictation.

The cover sheet introduces the piece and situates it historically by giving pertinent information about its composer, title, date of composition, and historical or biographical context. It supplies information about text or plot as relevant. On the cover sheet in Example 3, Heine is identified as the poet, and the portion of the poem that appears in the musical excerpt is included in the original German and in translation, to facilitate understanding of elements such as mood, tone, and text painting. (I supply texts and translations for all texted excerpts, which range from Lied to Latin mass, from mariachi to *mélodie*, from psalm setting to standard to popular song).

All cover sheets identify one primary and additional secondary tasks. On Example 3, this is expressed as “Melodic dictation + bass line + Roman numerals + cadences.”⁹ Hierarchizing tasks in this way obviates a difficulty that every aural skills instructor has faced, namely, how to deal with the differences in background, ability, and solving time that characterize the student population of any course. For most templates, students who complete the primary task quickly will have something further to listen for in subsequent hearings, while other students are still solving the primary task. Perhaps more importantly, the combination of primary and secondary tasks provides a natural way to integrate polyphonic and/or analytic processing. “Extra” tasks are typically more difficult, because they involve notating a part that is more challenging or more hidden in the texture than the primary part, or more analytical, in that they fuse the vocabulary and skills of written theory with the sounding content of music.

In an effort to tether the acquisition of notational skills to the aural skills curriculum, many cover sheets provide reminders about notational principles and practices. In this way, students gain procedural knowledge of notation, in addition

8 Karpinski (1990, 212) suggests that students who listen to recordings (say of Haydn symphonies) “benefit from both increased memory skills and greater familiarity with the literature through such exercises.”

9 Templates include these “extra” tasks from the very start; see, e.g., the templates for pieces by Lloyd Webber and Britten below. When (as in Example 3) the extra task involves notating a bass voice, this exposes students to what Karpinski (2000a, 121) calls “an entirely new mode of perception,” one that is “at first puzzling and seemingly inscrutable.”

to the declarative knowledge gleaned in the theory classroom.¹⁰ Along with a few other cover sheets from early in the curriculum, that for “Am Meer” offers a reminder about an idiosyncrasy of notating music with text—in this case that changes of syllable should be notated with flagged notes (even if the group would otherwise be beamed together to project the piece’s metric subdivisions). The first template to mention this practice (for “Memory,” from *Cats*) points students to Thomas Forrest Kelly’s description of its origin in the history of notation.¹¹

Cover sheets also provide sets of questions and comments that address elements of harmony, form, motive, and other musical details.¹² The questions avoid proprietary jargon and are cast in intuitive language, making the templates adaptable to different populations and uses. Some cover sheets feature sophisticated comments and questions about issues such as affect, history, meaning, articulation, and/or performance. These are designed to galvanize musical and creative thinking and to serve as prompts either for in-class discussions or for lengthier, written responses. Some cover sheets cite scholarly work on the excerpt in question, so that interested students can get a taste of the ways that music researchers in various subfields have attempted to elucidate the music. For instance, the cover sheet for “Am Meer” cites Joseph Kerman on the song’s affect and Stephen Rodgers on its form. My hope is that including the voices of theorists and musicologists, composers and conductors, performers, philosophers, and more will help to lay the foundation for a broad, humanistic understanding of music.

On the templates themselves, terms from foreign languages, including those denoting tempo markings, articulations, and more, are translated. This eliminates the need for an unwieldy glossary, such as one sometimes sees in aural skills workbooks¹³ and invites students to engage with performance indications. In my classes, it has led to fruitful discussion of the extent to which the performers heard in the recordings obey them. Unusually, for dictation exercises, slurs, hairpins, and other articulations are also given for all parts, including those that are missing. This also raises issues about performers, performances, and performance practice—what do slurs, portamentos, dynamic markings, and accents, mean? What do they sound like, and do performers actually pay attention to them?

10 Cf. Karpinski (2000a, 87–89).

11 Kelly (2014, 10–16).

12 Karpinski (2000a, 12) mentions the benefits of asking such questions. My templates merely build them in to the task.

13 See, for example, Merritt and Castro (2016).

For texted pieces, the sung text is notated on the score itself, even where the notes have been hidden, which acts as a springboard for the understanding of meter, scansion, and text setting. Sometimes, as in m. 6 of Example 3, tricky rhythms or pitches are provided on an ossia staff; other times, they are given on the main staff itself. This permits the use of pieces containing pitch and rhythm materials that are above the students' levels at otherwise appropriate points in the curriculum. It provides valuable experience seeing and hearing musical phenomena that are more challenging than students can dictate before these are officially broached.

Finally, relevant analytical questions and observations are given on the templates themselves, where they can direct the students' ears and analytical faculties in real time. From the first templates to the last, this practice encourages students to recognize and deal with fundamental musical behaviors such as motive, repetition, sequence, retrograde and inversion, cadence, and more.

The project I advocate here, then, only superficially resembles the sort of dictation exercises that are carried out in most aural skills classrooms. For in addition to cultivating and honing various aspects of students' hearing, the templates I offer are designed additionally to develop their understanding of musical concepts, music history, performance practice, notation, music recordings, foreign languages, research in music and the humanities, and more. They train the student to bring the visual aspect of music into contact with the more familiar sonic one, and in so doing, they turn the sounding stuff of music into an object of study. The primary benefits of these novel features are treated more fully in the next section, where they are placed in relation to research on aural skills acquisition and pedagogy. Instructors seeking details on how to use dictation templates effectively may skip to the second-to-last section of the article.

Novelties and Benefits

Real Recordings, Real Music

One of the most distinctive parts of my approach is that it revolves around recordings of real pieces of music, to be found by instructors and students in the vast ecosystem of internet streaming media. As far as I know, these templates are unique in that they avail themselves of the massive amount of commercially recorded music available on YouTube, Spotify, and similar services, imbricated as these are already in the lives of students and instructors alike. In so doing, they sidestep at least two significant problems that bedevil current aural skills texts, including: (1) that these often feature MIDI recordings or recordings that are made “in house” by students and

faculty, with their attendant limits on ability, instrumentation, and technology¹⁴; and (2) dealing with the fuss of proprietary publisher webpages, which are user unfriendly, compared with those of the mainstream commercial behemoths. Where pieces and/or recordings are under copyright, students can get a taste of the feeling that Mozart had in 1770—that they are bringing them into circulation by illicitly transcribing them in the way that he did the famous *Miserere*.

Listening primarily to professional and semi-professional recordings invites students to deal with a handful of essentially musical difficulties absent from the sterilized environment of the traditional dictation exercise. Foremost among these are the needs to factor for expressive timings, timbral differences, and the vagaries of recorded sound, all of which are absent from laboratory-style dictation exercises led by an instructor from the keyboard.¹⁵ Also crucial is the need to find downbeats and starting pitches based on musical context, not on the artificial grounding in meter and key that are typically given before playing dictation exercises.¹⁶ In this way, the templates confront and engage actual musical performances in their total musical contexts. They inculcate musicality from the earliest stages of the curriculum.

“Real pieces of music” is a charged construction that deserves comment. What I mean is perhaps most easily put in a negative formulation: the approach advocated here is designed to avoid what I see as a particularly harrowing (and potentially stunting) Scylla and Charybdis of aural skills education. On one side, threatening Scylla: a heap of made-up and extracted sight-singing exercises that strip context, history, and timbre from the melodies that they present. On the other, treacherous Charybdis: a mass of dictation exercises, run from the piano, in which, in one fell swoop, “pedagogical” melodies played on the single-timbred instrument leech the lifeblood from the music and the interest from the student.¹⁷

14 Inman (2018) praises the recordings in Merritt and Castro’s *Comprehensive Aural Skills* but notes that “a few contain flaws in intonation or rhythm.”

15 On tempo fluctuations in the context of the aural skills classroom, including a summary of research, see Karpinski (2000, 16).

16 More on the question of whether to ground students in a key may be found in Karpinski (1990, 205) and (2000a, 92–98); I discuss the issue more fully in the final section of the article.

17 In making dictation exercises less artificial, the hope is to remove at least some of the dread and boredom reported by students who do not see why dictation should be a component of their aural skills education (see Paney, 4 and cf. Karpinski 2000a, 129). Karpinski (2000b, [5.2], [5.4], and [5.5]) provides a trenchant critique of “atomistic” training exercises that strip context from aural skills: “it still seems that a vast amount of aural skills training uses artificially constructed music.”

It is not that our training as music theorists does not provide us with sufficient skill to write any number of anodyne little tunes that drill this or that element of written theory, but rather that relying exclusively on such tunes can have deleterious effects on our students' acquisition of knowledge. For one thing, doing so does not expose students to the way that these musical phenomena are *expressed* in the various repertoires that we claim to be introducing them to. For another, it may keep hidden from view all the wonderful aspects of music that have drawn students and instructors to music in the first place. From the vantage of the current approach, resources that boast the “unparalleled musicality” of their proprietary examples, represent the problem in its purest form.¹⁸

My dictation templates instead use melodies from the treasury of published and recorded music spanning several centuries, genres, and styles. Filling out the templates thus exposes students to the very music that we theorists too often hope they will get to know elsewhere, be it in music history courses, private lessons, or the concert hall. Making real recordings part of the process of dictation means creating space to talk about elements of musical performance that are more often left out of theory curricula. (These include, most obviously, instrumental and vocal timbres, which Karpinski (2000a, 13–14) notes are often absent from the aural skills curriculum.) But the approach grounds students in all of the so-called “basic features” of music mentioned by Karpinski, including texture, timbre, tempo, dynamics, articulation, and more (11). Making real recordings the basis of dictation also obviates the need for an anthology of pieces, that common adjunct for aural skills textbooks; in my classroom, the collection of templates *is* the anthology.¹⁹

I raise here the possibility that my templates have transcended one of the limitations of dictation identified in a well-known article by Karpinski: “Certainly,” he wrote there,

¹⁸ The quotation comes from the online platform Artusi, which features “a proprietary library of 1000+ progressions and melodies, all hand-written by music teachers, *for unparalleled musicality*” (my emphasis); Similarly, the platform called Picardy uses “musical examples and exercises [*that*] are *expertly crafted and sequenced* to promote an effective and meaningful learning experience” (my emphasis). Other online resources, e.g., the website <http://music-literacy.com/>, both auto-generate and auto-grade their melodies.

¹⁹ A further benefit of using recordings of real music is that it leads directly to knowledge of repertoire and the differing style characteristics of various genres and time periods. Cf. Karpinski (2000a, 129) on the benefits for students of exposure to the “realistic and contextual environment” of music and the “indoctrination with a body of literature.”

dictation does not address the kinds of broad-scaled listening skills often taught in music history, literature, analysis, and appreciation classes. . . . ear-training classes are geared towards a kind of fine, detailed listening with attention to the smallest items of pitch and rhythm. (1990, 191)

“On the contrary!” the current approach protests. For the type of dictation advocated here addresses exactly the sorts of “broad-scaled listening skills” Karpinski mentions. Think only of the experience with listening that taking dictation from real recordings offers the budding orchestral musician; the way it will likely render preparing for listening and style exams less onerous; the runway it surely provides for counterpoint and orchestration courses.

Polyphony, Channels, Streams

Because dictation templates make use of recordings of multi-voice (and multi-instrumental) music, they lead naturally to a conception of music as a combination of separate melodic “streams.”²⁰ This conception, and the sort of perception that it affords, is obviously decisive for understanding and learning to adequately account for certain repertoires and genres (for instance Renaissance and Baroque music, the invention, canon, and fugue). It plays an equally important, if perhaps less obvious, role in other repertoires. Yet, despite its importance for developing musicianship, training students to perceptually separate the individual threads of polyphonic fabric does not seem to be emphasized in high school or college curricula.²¹

My dictation templates ask students to segregate melodic streams in both imitative and non-imitative multi-voice dictations, in both classical and popular styles (see, e.g., my template for of The Cranberries, “Dreams”). They do not treat polyphony as some added or “extra” component of music or of dictation, to be studied

20 I borrow the word from the auditory psychologists, for whom an “auditory stream” is a single line of a polyphonic texture, understood as a “mental organizational entity” (Hartmann and Johnson 1991, 156). “Stream segregation,” a term coined by A. S. Bregman in 1971 to describe humans’ innate ability to group multiple auditory signals together, is reliant on a faculty called “peripheral channeling.” The most important peripheral channels seem to be based on frequency (i.e., grouping by pitch proximity) and left/right ear presentation (i.e., grouping by location of the sound source). For more on these, see Deutsch (2007). A fascinating podcast about Tchaikovsky’s Sixth Symphony that includes auditory examples may be found at <https://slate.com/human-interest/2019/06/hi-phi-nation-on-sound-illusions-tchaikovskys-6th-symphony-and-how-the-mind-constructs-the-world-of-sound.html?fbclid=IwAR2WB1lPBUNoHc3g8gf3bb5Q5LbJdWexUJUUp7PP52xHr9DN7QcZl6pdoOA>

21 See Karpinski (2000a, 111). Duerksen (2009, 398) criticizes Karpinski’s *Manual for Ear Training and Sight Singing* on these grounds: “Another element that receives only cursory attention is dictation for more than one part.” This is perhaps striking, since Karpinski himself criticizes the dearth of multipart dictations in American textbooks.”

in a unit on counterpoint; they simply present it as part of how music is. Multipart dictation exercises emerge already in a unit on rhythmic fundamentals, before pitch has even entered the equation (my template for Haydn’s “Nelson” Mass serves as a representative example). Templates that feature multi-voice (and even imitative) counterpoint in the pitch domain first appear in the first unit on diatonic materials (see e.g., the Appendix for template for Grieg’s “Heimweh”). Many templates ask students to perform analytic tasks that strengthen their understanding of polyphonic music, including identifying points of imitation, labeling vertical intervals created through the combination of statements of a subject, and notating various parts of an orchestral fabric. Needless to say, these and similar exercises lay the groundwork for an understanding of counterpoint. The results of some empirical studies suggest that they should also lead to improvements in sight singing, performance, and composition.²²

Score Reading and the Visual Aspect

My dictation templates encourage students to see and understand the operative elements of music notation. Gaining familiarity with reading scores is not typically seen as the goal of dictation, which may explain why it has seemed satisfactory to present exercises on staves with minimal or acontextual information (e.g., “Ex. 1.6”), or to have students “set up” their own blank staff paper at their desks by adding meter and key signatures and barlines. Since my templates for dictation include the totality of visual symbols that appear on a printed score, they invite students to grapple with such things as the traditional layout of multi-instrumental scores called “score order”; how to read multipart scores quickly and efficiently; which instruments transpose; and the various C clefs. On a higher order, and relating to the foregoing section on polyphony, multipart templates invite students to understand how voices combine, which voices are perceptually salient and why, and how harmonic hearing can be seen to arise from the combination of parts. (Such questions are typically placed under the umbrella of “harmony and voice leading” and saved for written theory courses.)

Providing fully fledged, multipart scores also means that the parts already provided on the template guide the eyes and ears of students while taking dictation. Students may use their analytic understanding to ask whether a pitch they are writing does or does not fit in a given context (e.g., “I am writing a ninth above the bass here; does this pitch sound like a dissonance?”) Moreover, many of the dictation templates

²² Rogers (2013) writes that “high achievement in multipart aural dictation was the best predictor of high achievement in [sight singing, performance, and composition skills].”

easily double as exercises in aural or written harmonic analysis; students may be asked to provide Roman numerals using either their ears, during the exercise, or their eyes, as specified by the instructor. However the templates are used, completed exercises double as objects of analytic study: they can, in turn, be used in various ways for follow-up assignments.

In modeling proper practices regarding notes, dynamics, articulations, flags and beams, score order, and more, my templates transcend another of the limits of dictation identified by Karpinski (1990, 196), namely that it does not teach or develop “the craft of notation,” but merely “serves as drill and practice” for it. That the “essence” of notation “is traditionally taught in the written theory classroom” does not preclude meaningful engagement with it elsewhere. Indeed, students taking dictation from my templates learned a great deal about notating multipart scores that they may not have learned elsewhere in the College of Wooster’s core theory curriculum. I would argue, then, that the templates have been useful for developing musical *literacy*, a process not even mentioned by Karpinski in sections on dictation. Karpinski seems to think that literacy is necessary in order to take dictation and does not consider the various ways in which dictation can serve as an aid to literacy.

C Clefs and Transposition

Several of my templates involve C clefs and transposing instruments. These templates develop and reinforce skills that are presented in music theory textbooks but that (at least my) written and skills curricula do not confront head on. Such skills will no doubt be valuable for students in conducting and music education programs and should also appeal to instructors who teach at a wide variety of institutions. Templates for transposing instruments and C clefs give students an idea of what it is like to notate and compose music for various ensembles. It has been pedagogically useful for me to present C clefs and transposing instruments, not as abstract concepts to be understood, but as skills to be mastered through drill and practice.

I would emphasize that dictation templates can develop musicianship not only during the act of dictation but also after the exercise has been completed. Since completed templates become musical artifacts—not a line of music on an otherwise blank sheet of torn-out manuscript paper but a score of various parts, with dynamics, articulations, and texts—they encourage students to play through them afterwards. Students who are entranced by the harmonies in a Tchaikovsky symphonic movement or enchanted by a love song by Jimmy Van Heusen may realize these on their own instruments in groups, or individually at the piano (I often hear my students playing

through pieces I have assigned in the practice rooms below my office). To bring the templates in this unit to life, they must be able to factor for transposing instruments and C clefs.

Music Theory, Music History, Music and the Humanities

My approach to dictation aims to ground a broad, humanistic understanding of music—including music theory, history, and criticism—in the stuff of music itself. If this seems unusual, this is only because my goal, which is to cultivate a more complete understanding of music, is not typically associated with the aural skills curriculum, as Karpinski and others have pointed out. I would argue that the aural skills classroom has been unfairly overlooked as a place where students can be exposed to histories, biographies, theories, and ideas, and that our conception of aural skills courses in terms of learning the “brass tacks” of hearing and notation has had the unwanted effect of minimizing their effectiveness as gateways to a love and understanding of music. Using these templates in my classes has shown that it is possible to move from the sounding surface of music to a robust understanding of musical histories and styles, one that complements and supplements the written theory curriculum in desirable ways.

The observations and questions on my cover sheets and templates are designed to seed students’ imaginations. Some of these concern what music theory textbooks consider brute facts about music: form and formal function, harmony and voice leading, dynamics and articulation, notation, and so forth. Others raise issues about “extra-musical” phenomena that are more often passed over in textbooks: intertextuality, composer biography, and performance practice. Still others invite students to comment upon dramatic aspects of the piece or the performance or invite students to speculate on passages that behave unexpectedly, or differently than the ways that they have been taught that they “ought” to. This, I think, is uncommon in the undergraduate aural skills classroom.

As I have mentioned, questions on cover sheets do not demand familiarity with any particular analytical approach (that of Caplin, say, or that of Laitz). This is because the goal is not to test for understanding of proprietary vocabulary but to spur students’ musical thinking and imagination. Indeed, what distinguishes the approach is the nature of the questions themselves: students are invited to understand musical behaviors from the (sounding) music up, as opposed to from the (written) concept down. In this, my project is again consonant with that of Chenette (2020), who argues

for perception-based learning goals.²³

It is noteworthy that these hints, questions, and insights appear on the templates themselves. Some annotations are analytical, and call attention to a sequence or motivic parallelism, or ask a question about an initial scale degree or a repetition. Others are pedagogical, highlighting practical difficulties like tricky melodic leaps or chromatic tones and offering suggestions for ways to overcome them. These visual aids are primers in music analysis; they direct the students' ears in real time, inviting them to come to terms with analytic issues at the very moment that they are listening to music. This real-time exposure to analysis is a valuable experience that further distinguishes my templates from similar exercises.²⁴

Additional historical, analytical, and interpretive tidbits further broaden the range of ways in which students may engage with the pieces of music. These include quotations from historical and recent literature on music, where those passages are relevant, enlightening, or beautiful. They sometimes include information about historically important performances (e.g., riots at premieres, copyright scandals, and so forth). Where possible, they point to particular features in the pieces that may have caused such excitement and disputes. I have done this, not only to integrate the intellectual aspect of music with the sensuous one, but more broadly, to integrate the subjects taught in the music department with those from other departments in the college or university: English, history, comparative literature, African American Studies, Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies, and so on. In this respect, my templates seek to participate in the current "decentering" of music theory and the radical opening of its boundaries.

How to Use Dictation Templates

Dictation templates are versatile and easy to use; they should be plug and play for college theory, musicianship, and fundamentals courses. Since students may find their own recordings of pieces for dictation using YouTube, Spotify, etc., and since the excerpts in question all come from the beginnings of works (or of sections of works), all that an instructor must do is simply choose from among the templates one that

23 Cf. Karpinski (2000a, 139), who writes that "many pages of theory and analysis textbooks are devoted to identifying [particular musical features] by sight from music notation. . . . But—since music is at heart an aural art form—we should concentrate equally emphatically on the ability to recognize and identify these features through listening."

24 For instance, those found in Laitz's *The Complete Musician*. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for emphasizing this point.

is appropriate to the students' level and consonant with their learning goals and set the parameters of the exercise (in-class versus out of class; homework versus quiz; number of hearings; and so on). The following section details some possibilities for integrating dictation templates into existing curricula.

I use dictation templates both in and out of the classroom. I assign them for ungraded practice as well as in graded situations like homework assignments, quizzes, and exams. Periodically, when students need extra work, I give them out as extra credit assignments. In some semesters at the College of Wooster, my templates were regular parts of students' weekly homework exercises, either as required or as extra-credit tasks.

The differences in length and difficulty of the templates make them adaptable to a number of situations. Because multi-voice dictations, C clefs, and transposing instruments are available even on rudimentary templates, instructors may integrate these skills into dictations as early as they wish (for purposes of versatility, I have both concert and transposing versions of templates for pieces with transposing instruments). I try, especially in early sections of the curriculum, to emphasize music that students are connected to, which brings them into the process of dictation as willing participants. Once they are hooked, as it were, there tends to be more goodwill toward repertoires that they may be less familiar with.

Number of Hearings and Assessment

On the templates below, I do not specify a number of hearings for each of the dictations. This is because the appropriate number of hearings depends on, among other factors, student population, instructor goals, and the nature of the given task. For out-of-class assignments, such as homework or extra credit, I often give students as many hearings as needed, making these more transcription than dictation exercises.²⁵ This is especially true in classes that struggle with dictation and with musicianship generally; such classes profit from the extra practice. For in-class, quiz-style exercises, by contrast, the instructor may wish to limit the number of hearings.

On grading criteria, too, I remain mum, although I emphasize, as Karpinski does on this "personal matter," that whatever criteria of assessment are used "should be clear to students" (2000a, 109). As with the number of hearings, how one assesses dictation exercises will necessarily depend on the nature of the task. For example, is

²⁵ On the differences between dictation and transcription and the attendant benefits of each, see Karpinski (2000a, 98–99 and 128–29). For the purposes of this project, I use the general term "dictation" to cover both activities.

the dictation being submitted as extra credit? Has it been done at home with unlimited hearings, using the piano? Is it done in the classroom in a quiz situation? Are all students completing the same “primary” task of the template, or have some been instructed to try to complete its more advanced tasks? Instructors seeking particular suggestions for grading methods and rubrics may seek out Karpinski (2000, 103–10) and Paney (2007, 18–35). Such rubrics will need to be constructed and employed with flexibility. Of course, as Karpinski has noted, no matter what approach instructors take to assessment, they must be willing to provide robust and judicious feedback to students (2000a, 104, n. 58).

Choosing a Recording

The instructor may wish to vet the recordings to be used ahead of time. I have sometimes searched for them in the classroom, which leads to productive real-time discussion about quality of sound and performance. When I do choose the recordings ahead of time, I try to choose either one recording that presents the material in question clearly, or two contrasting recordings, a practice that can spark instructive (and sometimes passionate) discussion. Listening to a historically-informed performance of a Baroque work, say, alongside a recording of the same work played by modern orchestras, invites students to think about issues such as clarity, tempo, phrasing, acoustics, history, organology, and authenticity.²⁶ Indeed, comparing any two recordings of the same work raises crucial issues of performance and interpretation.

All excerpts for dictation are easily found online because they come from the beginnings of pieces. Instructors who wish to provide exact timings or a particular recording may certainly do so. On the other hand, instructors who wish to allow students to find their own recordings (as I often do) will not have to worry about their having to hunt to find the right spot. The only templates that require special attention in this regard are those for jazz tunes and standards, whose keys, instrumentation, character, and indeed, notes, can vary by recording. In such situations, I typically suggest a particular recording or pair of recordings to compare and contrast. In rare cases, templates are constructed with a particular recording in mind (see, e.g., my template of “Send in the Clowns,” from Sondheim’s *A Little Night Music*).

26 Consider, for instance, two recordings of the opening chorus from Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*, by John Eliot Gardiner (1988) and Otto Klemperer (1961). The chorale “Ich bin’s, ich sollte büßen” is equally instructive.

Other Parameters to Consider

In addition to the number of hearings, instructors may wish to determine the extent to which a piano may be used, whether to orient students in a key or a meter, whether to have students perform a preparatory singing pattern, whether to conduct during the recording, and whether to give a starting pitch or other tricky pitches or rhythms. Much of the cognitive scholarship on melodic dictation suggests that instructors should not provide such “extramusical” information to students.²⁷ In his *Manual for Ear Training*, Karpinski summarizes the findings of this scholarship:

Instructors are urged to present dictations and transcriptions while revealing only the most basic parameters Instructors should not provide a written starting note. . . . It is . . . important that instructors not play anything before students hear a dictation or transcription—no chord progression, no scale, not even a starting pitch. In addition, instructors are discouraged from counting preparatory beats before playing, and from counting, tapping, conducting, or otherwise indicating the beat or meter during dictations and transcriptions. Students must learn to *infer* the tonic, starting scale degree, pulse, meter, and other features from listening to the actual music. Similarly, breaking dictations into smaller sections and artificially emphasizing certain voices should be avoided during playings. (Karpinski 2017, x–xi)

“In practice,” he had already written in 1990 (203), “we should only reveal those facts that are not audible.”

Other approaches to dictation are irreconcilable with Karpinski’s position. In one Kodály-inspired curriculum described by Houlihan and Tacka (1990), students are asked to conduct, sing, solmize, determine beginning and ending notes, and identify contour, cadences, and meter, all before writing anything at all.²⁸ My own practice is located somewhere between these two extremes. I tend to provide some extramusical cues, especially toward the beginning of the curriculum. And for in-class situations, I very often move from the recording to the piano. If students are having trouble in class during ungraded situations, I conduct or even sing during the recording or at the piano, where, if necessary, I can also slow down the tempo. In ungraded situations, I also walk around the classroom offering personalized help. In graded situations, such as exams, I have sometimes specified ahead of time the number of hearings

²⁷ “Extramusical” is from Karpinski 2000, 92. On orienting students in a key, see Karpinski (1990, 205), who writes: “No one plays the tonic chord before an actual performance, so why do it in the aural skills classroom?” And: “one practice that prevents students from developing the skill of tonic identification is playing the tonic pitch or chord before performing a dictation.” On the pitfalls of preparatory singing patterns, see Buonviri 2015. On the downsides of giving students meter signatures and conducting during the performances see Karpinski (1990, 202–03). For summaries of studies in cognitive psychology, see Baker (2019).

²⁸ See Paney (2007, 32–33).

we will have from recording and the number that we will have from piano. Most of my templates provide meter and key signatures, but a few, especially early in the curriculum, ask the student to supply these.

Aural skills instructors may benefit from reading the cognitive science on the topic, which is concerned with such issues as how to ascertain the difficulty of melodies, the appropriate number of hearings, the appropriate amount of time to give between hearings, whether to break dictations into parts, whether students should start writing immediately or listen first, whether they should concentrate on rhythm or pitch first, and perhaps especially how instructors can diagnose and remediate aural skills problems for struggling students.²⁹ But this is not necessary to make effective use of the templates below. Instructors will find my templates compatible with any number of other approaches to dictation, including both those grounded in the Karpinski method and the Kodály method. They may count, sing, or tap over the recordings, or not; they may conduct, or not; ask students to sing the tonic after playing the recordings, or not; work through tricky metrical problems, or not; and so forth, as they see fit.

Whatever differences my approach shares with that of Karpinski (e.g., in supplying staves, meter signatures, and key signatures), my enterprise is deeply consonant with his. This is because, for Karpinski, the detrimental practices surrounding dictation are those that offer artificial or acontextual listening experiences. This is the crux, too, of my position: why teach the rudiments of dictation in some laboratory, only to have to teach all the rest of what makes music *music* in some later, “advanced” course or unit of the curriculum? I might even submit that my templates, taken together, present music to the student more directly than does Karpinski: for the topics they choose to drill are not suggested by the results of some statistical corpus analysis that lays out the frequency with which this or that musical phenomenon (say, an interval) occurs in so-called real music. On the contrary, the music in my collection of templates *is* the statistical data, and the behaviors that are showcased therein are the behaviors that students are exposed to, without the mediating influence of corpus or statistical analyses. To borrow a turn from Whitman (100), I “send no agent or medium . . . and offer no / representative of value—but offer the value itself.”

29 On ascertaining the difficulty of melodies for dictation, see Paney (2007, 12). For summaries of best practices concerning the other issues in this sentence, see Karpinski (2000, 92–103).

Further Work, Specified and Un-

Most of my templates permit further work, subject to the desires of the instructor (or the interested student). Often, further work is specified on the cover sheet or the template. Where it is not, the instructor may proceed along several lines. They may, for example, ask students to hear extra or inner voices, supply Roman numerals, provide an analysis of form, label sequences and/or vertical contrapuntal intervals, identify cadences, analyze modulations by type, or provide voice-leading reductions. They may also use the template in conjunction with other aural tasks, such as identifications (of mode, scale, scale degrees, contour, intervals, pulse, meter, hypermeter, timbre, texture, and tonic), singbacks, playbacks, error detection and correction, tapping, moving, dancing, and all number of imaginable others. They may ask the class to perform the music on the completed template. As mentioned above, such additional work can help level the playing field: students who are quick at solving the primary task of the dictation may be asked to provide extra information while others stay focused on the primary task. Each instructor, and each class, will have different goals and different priorities.

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Appendix: Twenty-Five Dictation Templates

Templates From Unit I on Rhythm Alone

Templates in this unit are designed to help students to learn to hear and notate rhythm and meter in one and then in multiple parts. Multipart rhythm exercises provide an early opportunity to try to separate polyphonic streams and to get to know the sounds of different instrumental and vocal timbres. A full staff is given for students who want to experiment with adding pitch information.³⁰ Sometimes, I return to these pieces later in the curriculum in order to add pitch content. But in the first few weeks of fundamentals or first-semester aural skills, full credit is earned simply notating the correct rhythms on a single line or space of the staff.

For simple meter:

1. Lloyd Webber, “The Music of the Night,” from *Phantom of the Opera*

For compound meter:

2. Lloyd Webber, “Memory,” from *Cats*

For a denominator of 2 in the meter signature:

3. Britten, from *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*

For stream segregation on a multipart score:

4. Haydn, “Kyrie,” from *Missa in Angustiis*

Templates From Unit II on Diatonic Materials

Once pitch is introduced, my templates eschew atomistic exercises that introduce and drill rhythmic patterns, scales, and so forth. Instead, the relevant musical phenomena are folded in to melodic (or multipart) templates. This makes for a homogeneous experience across units and also means that exercises throughout the curriculum are maximally contextual.³¹ The diatonic templates below are divided into

³⁰ Students may, for instance, provide approximations of contour and intervals, perhaps in the manner described by Karpinski 2000a (48–49), in which they write “s” for step and “l” for leap, “+” for ascending and “-” for descending, and letters for solfege syllables. Some instructors may wish to be more specific about pitch-based extras, asking students to identify aspects of the work aurally (e.g., mode), or to notate scales, identify key signatures, scale degrees, contour, or intervals beyond those asked for on the cover sheets. If the dictations are done in class, instructors may use the templates to inculcate Karpinski’s “preliminary listening skills (identification of pulse, meter, hypermeter, timbre, texture, inference of tonic). They may be integrated with the “other exercises” he mentions (129–132) such as singbacks, playbacks, error detection and correction, and more.

³¹ This is consonant with Karpinski (2000a, 32), who writes that “it seems more musical and more responsive to the innate behavior of musical memory to contextualize rhythmic listening, understanding, and notation as part of the broader study of melodic dictation. Metric and rhythmic

four sections: (1) single-voice; (2) multi-voice; (3) transposing instruments; (4) C clefs. Three of these templates, for Haydn's "Emperor" Quartet, Jacobs-Bond's "I Love You Truly," and Schubert's G-flat major Impromptu, are relevant to the transition between diatonic and chromatic materials.

Single-Voice Diatonic Dictations

5. Britten, arr. "The Salley Gardens"
6. Price, "Sympathy" ("I know why the caged bird sings")
7. Burleigh, arr. "Deep River"
8. Sondheim, "Send in the Clowns," from *A Little Night Music*
9. Schubert, "Am Meer," from *Schwanengesang*
10. Verdi, "Addio del passato," from *La Traviata*
11. Mozart, "Laudate Dominum," from the *Vesperae solennes de confessore* ("Vespers"), K. 339
12. Mahler, "Die zwei blauen Augen," from *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*
13. Jacobs-Bond, "I Love You Truly," from *Seven Songs as Unpretentious as the Wild Rose*

Multi-voice Diatonic Dictations

14. The Cranberries, "Dreams"
15. Schubert, Impromptu in A-Flat Major, D. 935, no. 2
16. Grieg "Heimweh" from *Lyric Pieces*, op. 57, no. 6
17. Mahler, Symphony No. 1 in D Minor, iii
18. Bizet, "Farandole" from *L'Arlesienne* Suite No. 2
19. Haydn, String Quartet in C Major, op. 76, no. 6 "Emperor," ii. Poco adagio
20. Schubert, Impromptu in G-Flat Major, D. 899, no. 3

Dictations With Transposing Instruments

21. Dvořák, Symphony No. 9, "From the New World," ii. Largo
22. Franck, Symphony in D minor, ii, Allegretto.

Dictations With C clefs

23. Brahms, "Geistliches Wiegenlied," op. 91, no. 2
24. Dvořák, String Quartet Op. 96, "American," i
25. Dvořák, String Quartet Op. 96, "American," ii

cognition play an integral role as part of this more comprehensive process—particularly as practitioners begin to grapple with each remembered section of music." He continues (115): "isolated rhythmic drills. . . if practiced at all, should be integrated as soon as possible into the world of pitches."

01. Meter Signature and Rhythmic Dictation (+ pitch extras)

Andrew Lloyd Webber – “The Music of the Night,” from *Phantom of the Opera* (1986)

Add a time signature to this piece by Andrew Lloyd Webber using the first two bars as clues. Then, notate the rhythm only of the Phantom’s song on the upper staff. I’ve removed the bar lines, so you’ll have to add your own in the appropriate places!

Also notate the rhythm of the winds when they come in on the second system of music. (You can do this on the same staff as the vocal melody.). The last bar you notate should be the 2/4 bar.

Note: You may notate the rhythm on a single line or space of the staff. If you’d like to take a crack at the pitches of this excerpt, feel free. You will not lose points for trying it out!

To consider:

1. Have you ever noticed this 2/4 bar? Before making this template, I hadn’t. It is a wonderful touch, and it comes back every time this music occurs, altering the song’s placid quadruple periodicity.
2. String players: at the words “silently the senses,” are the strings playing quiet tremoli, as I’ve notated? I think I hear that, but I’m not sure!
3. Singers: have you ever wondered about the difference between “head voice” and “chest voice”? Michael Crawford gives a pretty clear example of both here in his treatment of two A flats: for head voice, listen to the one that occurs on the word “soar” at around 1:53. For chest voice, compare the parallel moment, on the word “be” at around 3:20.
4. Webber writes *rubato* here as an indication to the performers. *Rubato* is an Italian word that means “robbed”; it refers to *tempo rubato*, or “stolen time,” a sort of elastic way of shaping a phrase by speeding up and slowing down for expressive effect. The Crawford recording, I think, does a good job with this. But does it make it harder to hear the underlying meter?
5. A snippet from this melody was so similar to the love theme from Puccini’s 1910 opera *La fanciulla del west* that Puccini’s estate took Andrew Lloyd Webber to court over it. The passage in question is from “Quello che tacete,” toward the end of the first act. (The text is “E provai una gioia strana.” Have a listen on YouTube or Spotify and answer: in your opinion, is this music similar enough to warrant a law suit?

Template 01: Cover Sheet

Andrew Lloyd Webber – “The Music of the Night,” from *Phantom of the Opera* (1986)

supply a time signature!

start here

mp

PHANTOM:

Night-time sharp-ens heigh-tens each sen-sa - tion,

p strings

harp

rubato

Dark-ness stirs and wakes i-mag-i - na - tion Si-lent-ly the sen - ses a -

pp

switch to winds here

stop here

ban-don their de - fen - ses

horns

Template 01: Score

Andrew Lloyd Webber – “The Music of the Night,” from *Phantom of the Opera* (1986)

03. One-Voice Rhythmic Dictation (+ diatonic melody with a sequence)

Britten – *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra: Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell* (1945)

This music was commissioned from Britten by the British Ministry of Education. They wanted a piece to go with a documentary film about the instruments of the Orchestra. In the film, conductor Malcolm Sargent uses Britten's music "to take this great musical box to pieces—[to] show the various instruments and let you hear their own particular sounds." (The film is available online; Google it!)

The famous melody that Britten here subjects to a series of variations is based on an earlier British piece, the Rondeau from Purcell's incidental music to Aphra Behn's play *Abdelazer*, from 1695.

Notate the rhythm only for its first period, which lasts eight measures. If you'd like, take a crack at pitches as well.

Note: The beat note here is different than the quarter note, seen more commonly in triple meter. Research has shown that students score higher when the bottom number of simple time signatures is 4 (and when the bottom number of compound signatures is 8). (Karpinski 2000, 89-90) Be sure to get this right!

Two things are marked with brackets on the score:

1. The first four notes outline the tonic triad (D Minor, D, F, A, D). Can you hear this? Notate the pitches for an extra point.
2. The melody in measures 3-6 forms what is known as a "sequence," a series of repetitions of a melody at different pitch levels.

Template 03: Cover Sheet

Britten – *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra: Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell* (1945)

Allegro maestoso e largamente
(Fast, majestic, and broad)

a tonic triad:

do

me

So

do

this type of altered melodic repetition is called a "sequence"

Full Orch.

 $\int_1$

marc.

marc.

Template 03: Score

Britten – Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra: Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell (1945)

Full Orch.

a tonic triad.
do me so do

this type of altered melodic repetition is called a "sequence"

f marc.

05. One-Voice Diatonic Dictation Template (+ analysis of form)

Britten (arr.) – “The Salley Gardens” (1943)

This is an Irish folk song arranged by the English composer Benjamin Britten. The text is by the Irish poet W. B. Yeats; it's from *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems* (1889).

Notate the four phrases of the folksy vocal melody, which is completely diatonic.

Then consider the “form” of the melody. Are any phrases repeated exactly? Write onto the score the form of the entire 20-measure melody using letters as you would for a rhyme scheme (e.g., “A” for the first section and all repetitions of it, “B” for sections that aren’t A and for any repetitions of it, and so on...) Have you heard the music that appears in m. 20 before? Where?

The musical score is for Benjamin Britten's arrangement of "The Salley Gardens" (1943). It is in 4/4 time and E-flat major. The score consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are by W.B. Yeats. Performance markings include *Flowing.*, *p smooth*, *pp smooth*, *express*, *piu f*, *dim.*, and *pp*. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 6, 11, and 16 indicated. The lyrics are: "Down by the Sal-ley_ gar - dens my_ love and, I did meet, She passed the Sal - ley_ gar - dens with lit - tle snow - white feet. She bid me take love ea - sy, as the leaves grow on_ the_ tree, But, I be-ing young and fool - ish with her did not a - gree."

Template 05

Britten (arr.) – “The Salley Gardens” (1943)

08. One Voice Diatonic Template (+ analysis)

Sondheim – “Send in the Clowns,” from *A Little Night Music* (1973)

This template is designed for use with a particular recording: that of Judy Collins, from 1975. Collins sings Sondheim’s most famous song in E Flat, a whole step above the key it was written in for Glynis Johns, who created the role of Desirée for *A Little Night Music*. An additional detail: in the introduction, Collins’s recording features an English horn instead of the clarinet called for on Sondheim’s original score.

Notate the top voice of this show tune (and now standard). Notice in mm. 8–9 the combination of two harmonies, tonic in the left hand, and dominant (or sometimes subdominant) in the right. Which do you suppose represents “me” (“here at last on the ground”), which “you” (“in mid-air”)?

Slowly, with freedom
(Introduction in solo English Horn; piano at m. 5)

5

Is-n't it rich? Are we a pair? Me here at
bliss? Don't you approve? One who keeps

8

last on the ground, you in mid - air, Send in the clowns.
tear-ing a - round, one who can't move. Where are the clowns?

11

Is-n't it clowns? Send in the clowns!

Template 08

Sondheim – “Send in the Clowns,” from *A Little Night Music* (1973)

14. Multi-Voice Melodic Dictation: An exercise in stream segregation
The Cranberries – “Dreams” (1992)

Notate the two vocal melodies of this breakout single from Irish band The Cranberries (1992). Both melodies are sung by the band’s lead singer, Dolores O’Riordan, who also wrote the song.

Some notes:

- I have tried to save space on the template in a few ways. First, it begins at m. 9, which is at the 0:17 second mark. Second, after the voice comes in, I have minimized information from other instruments.
- Though the rhythm of the vocal lines does not sound unusual, nevertheless syncopations make it difficult to notate. This happens quite a bit in popular music, in which syncopations are more common than in 18th- and 19th- century classical music. I have provided the rhythm for the melody on an ossia staff so that you don’t have to fuss with it. You will notice in copying it how awkwardly the system of notation deals with relatively simple sounding rhythms.
- If you are listening on headphones, you might notice some sophisticated aspects of the mix. Do you hear the guitar, whose strumming pattern pulses along in eighth notes, phases from left to right channels and back?
- In popular music, we typically speak of “melody,” which is the sort of primary vocal line, and “harmony,” which refers to any number of added vocal tracks that are subsidiary to the melody. (Typically, but not always, harmony lines are above the melody; often the two voices move in parallel thirds.) Is one line here, the upper or the lower, primary, and the other secondary? Or does this perhaps change somewhere in the middle of the verse?

Optional analytic tasks:

- Add Roman numerals. (You may not have a good label for what is going on in mm. 11–12; use prose to describe it.)
- Add interval labels between the two vocal lines. Circle any dissonant intervals and be able to account for them.

♩ approx. 128

m. 9 (0:17 sec.)

Guitar

Bass Guitar

Drum Set

Vox (1)

Guitar

Bass

Dr.

Rhythm given

start first vocal line here

All my

19 (rhythm given)

Vox (1)

life, is chan - ging e - ver - y day -

Bass

21

Vox (1)

e - very pos - si - ble - way -

Bass

Template 14: Score
The Cranberries – “Dreams” (1992).

2

24 (same rhythm as above)

Vox (1)

Vox (2)

Bass

take both vocal lines starting here

All my dreams, it's ne-ver quite as it seems,

All my dreams, it's ne-ver quite as it seems,

29

Vox (1)

Vox (2)

Bass

ne-ver quite as it seems.____

ne-ver quite as it seems.____

33

Vox (1)

Vox (2)

And though I felt____ like this be - fore____ now I'm fe -

And though I felt____ like this be - fore____ now I'm fe -

36

Vox (1)

Vox (2)

el - in' it e - ven more,____ be - cause it came from you.____

el - in' it e - ven more,____ be - cause it came from you.____

Template 14: Score (cont'd)
The Cranberries – “Dreams” (1992)

16. One- and then Two-Voice Dictation Template

Grieg – “Hjemve” (“Heimweh”; “Homesickness”), Op. 57, No. 6, from the 66 *Lyric Pieces*

In mm. 0-8, notate the top line only. At the pickup to m. 9, notate outer voices.

Identify the following:

- a melodic reprise
- a point of imitation
- a harmonic arrival on V
- a small-scale octave echo (e.g., of a cadence)
- a larger-scale octave repetition. Is there a registral connection to the opening melody?
- an unresolved leading tone (very Grieg!)

Andante.

start top voice

8

start two-voice

13

end bottom voice

Template 16

Grieg – “Hjemve” (“Heimweh”; “Homesickness”), Op. 57, No. 6, from the 66 *Lyric Pieces*

